



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

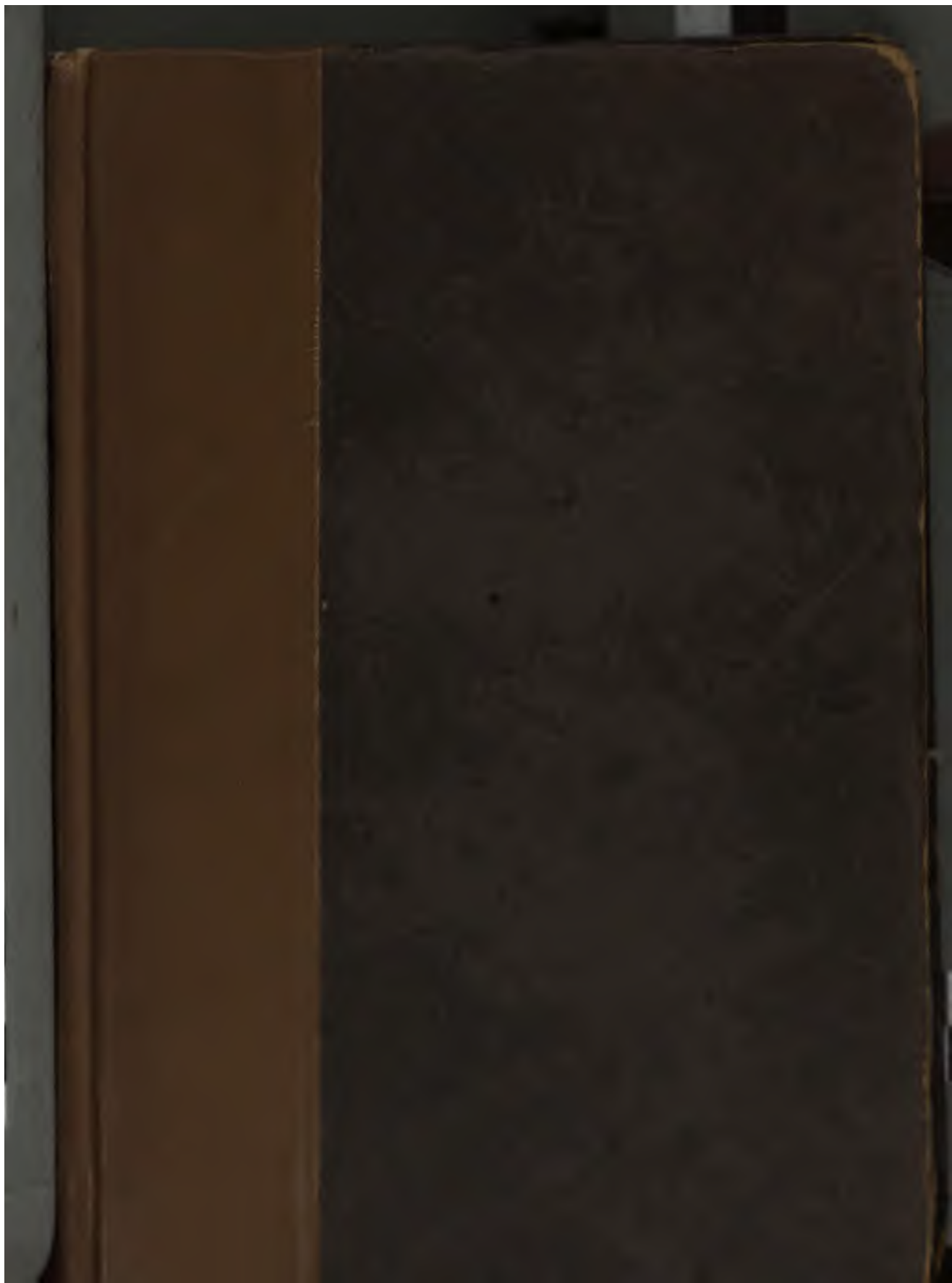
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>






FORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY

1









# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS

JOHN MONTAIGNE 1533-1592

*Only 1150 copies of this Edition have been printed  
for sale in England and America, and the type has  
been distributed.*





LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY

THE ESSAYES OF  
MICHAEL LORD OF  
**MONTAIGNE**

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY  
**JOHN FLORIO**

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
**THOMAS SECCOMBE**

THE SECOND BOOKE



LONDON  
**GRANT RICHARDS**

CARLTON STREET

MDCCLXXIII

*to read*

1143  
1176eEf<sub>1</sub>

136536

YRABU  
ROMA, ROMATE DIALE  
YTI2REVINU



# TABLE

## A TABLE OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE SECOND BOOKE

	PAGE
1. Of the inconstancie of our actions	1
2. Of Drunkennesse	11
3. A Custome of the Ile of Cea	25
4. To morrow is a new day	45
5. Of Conscience	48
6. Of exercise or practice	54
7. Of the recompences or rewards of honour	70
8. Of the affection of fathers to their children	75
9. Of the Parthians armes	105
10. Of Books	109
11. Of Cruelty	129
12. An Apologie of <i>Raymond Sebond</i>	151
13. Of judging of others death	404
14. How that our spirit hindreth it selfe	412
15. That our desires are increased by difficulty	414
16. Of Glorie	423
17. Of Presumption	442
18. Of giving the Lie	486
19. Of the liberty of conscience	492
20. We taste nothing purely	498
21. Against idlenesse, or doing nothing.	502

## A TABLE

	PAGE
22. Of running Posts, or Curriers . . . . .	508
23. Of bad meanes employed to a good end . . . . .	510
24. Of the Roman greatnesse . . . . .	515
25. How a man should not counterfet to be sicke . . . . .	517
26. Of Thumbs . . . . .	520
27. Cowardize the mother of cruelty . . . . .	522
28. All things have their season . . . . .	535
29. Of Vertue . . . . .	538
30. Of a monstrous childe . . . . .	548
31. Of anger and choler . . . . .	551
32. A defence of <i>Seneca</i> and <i>Plutarch</i> . . . . .	561
33. The history of <i>Spurina</i> . . . . .	570
34. Observations concerning the meanes to warre after the manner of <i>Julius Cæsar</i> . . . . .	581
35. Of three good women . . . . .	594
36. Of the worthiest and most excellent men . . . . .	605
37. Of the resemblance betweene children and fathers . . . . .	615



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### I

Of the inconstancie of our actions

There is some apparence to judge a man by the most common conditions of his life, but seeing the naturall instability of our customes and opinions; I have often thought, that even good Authors, doe ill, and take a wrong course, wilfully to opinionate themselves about framing a constant and solide contexture of us. They chuse an universall ayre, and following that image, range and interpret all a mans actions; which if they cannot wrest sufficiently, they remit them unto dissimulation. *Augustus* hath escaped their hands; for there is so apparent, so sudden and continuall a variety of actions found in him, through the course of his life, that even the boldest Judges and strictest censurers, have beene faine to give him over, and leave him undecided. *There is nothing I so hardly beleeeve to be in man, as constancie, and nothing so easie to be found in him, as inconstancy.* He that should distinctly and part by part, judge of him, should often jumpe to speake truth. View all antiquity over, and you shall finde it a hard matter, to chuse out a dozen of men, that have directed their life unto one certaine, settled, and assured course; which is the surest drift of wisdom. For, to comprehend all in one word, saith an ancient Writer, and to embrace all the rules of our life into one, it is at all times to will, and not to will one same thing. I would not vouchsafe, (saith he) to adde any thing; alwayes provided the will be just: for, if it be unjust, it is impossible it should ever continue one. Verily, I have heretofore learned, that vice is nothing but a disorder, and want of measure, and by consequence, it is impossible to fasten constancy unto it. It is a saying of *Demosthenes*, (as some report,) *That consultation and deliberation, is the beginning of all vertue; and constancie, the end and perfection.* If by reason or discourse we should take a certaine way, we should then take the fairest: but no man hath thought on it.

# THE SECOND BOOKE

*Quod petit, spernit, repetit quod nuper omisit,  
Actual, et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto.*

—HOR. i. *Epist.* i. 98.

He scorns that which he sought, seek's that he  
scorn'd of late,  
He flows, ebbs, disagrees in his lifes whole  
estate.

## CHAPTER I

Of the incon-  
stancie of our  
actions

Our ordinary manner is to follow the inclination  
of our appetite, this way and that way; on the left,  
and on the right hand; upward and downe-ward,  
according as the winde of occasions doth transport  
us: we never thinke on what we would have, but at  
the instant we would have it: and change as that  
beast that takes the colour of the place wherein it is  
hid. What we even now purposed, we alter by and  
by, and presently returne to our former biase: all is  
but changing, motion, and inconstancy:

*Ducimur ut nervis alienis mobile lignum.*

—HOR. ii. *Sat.* vii. 82.

So are we drawne, as wood is shoved,  
By others sinnewes each way moved.

We goe not, but we are carried: as things that  
lie, now gliding gently, now hulling violently;  
according as the water is, either stormy or calme.

—*nonne videmus*

*Quid sibi quisque velit noscere et quaerere semper,  
Commutare locum quasi onus deponere possit?*

—LUCR. ii. 1100.

See we not, every man in his thoughts height  
knowes not what he would have, yet seekes he  
straight  
To change place, as he could lay downe his  
weight:

Every day new toyes, each houre new fantasies,  
and our humours move and fleet with the fleetings  
and movings of time.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER

### I

Of the inconstance of our actions

*Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali Pater ipse  
Jupiter auctifero lustravit lumine terras.*—Cic. *Fragm.*

Such are mens mindes, as that great God of might  
Surveies the earth with encrease bearing light.

We float and waver betweene divers opinions: we will nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly. Had any man prescribed certaine Lawes, or established assured policies in his owne head; in his life should we daily see, to shine an equality of customes, an assured order, and an infallible relation from one thing to another (*Empedocles* noted this deformity to be amongst the *Agrigentines*, that they gave themselves so over unto delights, as if they should die to morrow next, and built as if they should never die) the discourse thereof were easie to be made. As is seene in young *Cato*: He that toucht but one step of it, hath touched all. It is an harmony of well according tunes and which cannot contradict it selfe. With us it is cleane contrary, so many actions, so many particular judgements are there requir'd. The surest way (in mine opinion) were to refer them unto the next circumstances, without entering into further search, and without concluding any other consequence of them. During the late tumultuous broiles of our mangled estate, it was told me, that a young woman, not farre from mee, had head-long cast her selfe out of a high window, with intent to kill herselfe, only to avoid the ravishment of a rascaly-base souldier, that lay in her house, who offered to force her: and perceiving that with the fall she had not killed herselfe, to make an end of her enterprize, she would have cut her owne throat with a knife, but that she was hindered by some that came in to her: Neverthelesse having sore wounded herselfe, she voluntarily confessed, that the Souldier had yet but urged her with importunate requests, suing-solicitations, and golden bribes, but



## THE SECOND BOOKE

she feared he would in the end have obtained his purpose by compulsion: by whose earnest speeches, resolute countenance, and gored bloud (a true testimony of her chaste vertue) she might appeare to be the lively patterne of another *Lucrece*, yet know I certainly, that both before that time, and afterward, she had beene enjoyed of others upon easier composition. And as the common saying is; Faire and soft, is squemish-honest as she seemes, although you misse of your intent, conclude not rashly an inviolable chastitie to be in your Mistresse; For, a groome or a horse-keeper may finde an houre to thrive in; and a dog hath a day. *Antigonus* having taken upon him to favour a Souldier of his, by reason of his vertue and valour, commanded his Physitians to have great care of him, and see whether they could recover him of a lingring and inward disease, which had long tormented him, who being perfectly cured, he afterward perceiving him to be nothing so earnest and diligent in his affaires, demanded of him, how he was so changed from himselfe, and become so [cowardish]: your selfe good Sir (answered he) have made me so, by ridding me of those infirmities, which so did grieve me, that I made no accompt of my life. A Souldier of *Lucullus*, having by his enemies beene robbed of all he had, to revenge himselfe undertooke a notable and desperat attempt upon them; and having recovered his losses, *Lucullus* conceived a very good opinion of him, and with the greatest shewes of assured trust and loving kindnesse he could bethinke himselfe, made especiall accompt of him, and in any dangerous enterprize seemed to trust and employ him only:

*Verbis quæ timido quoque possent addere mentem:*

—*Hon. ii. Epist. ii. 34.*

With words, which to a coward might

Adde courage, had he any spright.



*Montaigne at the age of Fifty.*

FROM THE ENGRAVING OF AUGUSTIN DE SAINT-AUBIN  
(1736-1807) AFTER THE PAINTING AT THE  
CHATEAU DE MONTAIGNE.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER I

Of the inconstancie of our actions

for besides, I remove and trouble my selfe by the instability of my posture, and whosoever looketh narrowly about himselfe, shall hardly see himselfe twice in one same state. Sometimes I give my soule one visage, and sometimes another, according unto the posture or side I lay her in. If I speake diversly of my selfe, it is because I looke diversly upon my selfe. All contrarieties are found in her, according to some turne or removing; and in some fashion or other. Shamefast, bashfull, insolent, chaste, luxurious, peevish, prating, silent, fond, doting, labourious, nice, delicate, ingenious, slow, dull, froward, humorous, debonaire, wise, ignorant, false in words, true-speaking, both liberall, covetous, and prodigall. All these I perceive in some measure or other to bee in mee, according as I stirre or turne my selfe; And whosoever shall heedfully survay and consider himselfe, shall finde this volubility and discordance to be in himselfe, yea and in his very judgement. I have nothing to say entirely, simply, and with soliditie of my selfe, without confusion, disorder, blending, mingling; and in one word, *Distinguo* is the most universall part of my logike. Although I ever purpose to speake good of good, and rather to interpret those things, that will beare it, unto a good sense; yet is it that, the strangenesse of our condition admitteth that we are often urged to do well by vice it selfe, if well doing were not judged by the intention only. Therefore may not a couragious act conclude a man to be valiant. He that is so, when just occasion serveth, shall ever be so, and upon all occasions. If it were an habitude of vertue, and not a sudden humour, it would make a man equally resolute at all assayes, in all accidents: Such alone, as in company; such in a single combat, as in a set battel; For, whatsoever some say, valour is all alike, and not one in the street or towne, and another in

Vol. I, 11  
Vol. II, #23

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

I

Of the inconstancie of our actions

the campe or field. As courageously should a man beare a sicknesse in his bed, as a hurt in the field and feare death no more at home in his house, than abroad in an assault. We should not then see one same man enter the breach, or charge his enemy with an assured and undouted fiercenesse, and afterward having escaped that, to vexe, to grieve and torment himselfe like unto a seely woman, or faint-hearted milke-sop for the losse of a sute, or death of a childe. If one chance to be carelesly base-minded in his infancie, and constantly-resolute in povertie; if he be timorously-fearefull at sight of a Barbers razor, and afterward stowtly-undismayed against his enemies swords: The action is commendable, but not the man. Divers Græcians (saith *Cicero*) cannot endure to looke their enemy in the face, yet are they most constant in their sickenneses; whereas the *Cimbrians*, and *Celtiberians*, are meere contrary. *Nihil enim potest esse æquabile, quod non à certa ratione proficiscatur* (*Cic. Tusc. Qu. ii. f.*): For nothing can beare it selfe even, which proceedeth not from resolved reason. There is no valor more extreme in his kinde, than that of *Alexander*; yet it is but in *species*, nor every where sufficiently full and universall. As incomparable as it is, it hath his blemishes, which is the reason that in the idleest suspicions, he apprehendeth at the conspiracies of his followers against his life, we see him so earnestly to vex, and so desperately to trouble himselfe: In search and pursuit whereof he demeaneth himselfe with so vehement and indiscreet an injustice, and with such a demisse feare, that even his naturall reason is thereby subverted. Also the superstition, wherewith he is so thoroughly tainted, beareth some shew of pusillanimitie. And the unlimited excesse of the repentance he shewed for the murther of *Clitus*, is also a witnesse of the inequalitye of his



## THE SECOND BOOKE

courage. Our matters are but parcels hudled up, and peeces patched together, and we endeavour to acquire honour by false meanes, and untrue tokens. *Virtue will not bee followed, but by her selfe*: And if at any time wee borrow her maske, upon some other occasion, she will as soone pull it from our face. It is a lively hew, and strong die, if the soule be once dyed with the same perfectly, and which will never fade or be gone, except it carry the skin away with it. Therefore to judge a man, we must a long time follow, and very curiously marke his steps; whether constancie doe wholly subsist and continue upon her owne foundation in him, *Cui vivendi via considerata atque provisa est* (Cic. Parad. v.): *Who hath forecast and considered the way of life*; whether the variety of occurrences make him change his pace (I meane his way, for his pace may either be hastened or slowed) let him run-on: such a one (as sayeth the imprease of our good Talbot) goeth before the wind. It is no marvell (saith an old writer) that hazard hath such power over us, since wee live by hazard. It is impossible for him to dispose of his particular actions, that hath not in grose directed his life unto one certaine end. It is impossible for him to range all peeces in order, that hath not a plot or forme of the totall frame in his head. What avayleth the provision of all sorts of colours unto one that knowes not what he is to draw? No man makes any certaine designe of his life, and we deliberate of it but by parcels. A skilfull archer ought first to know the marke he aimeth at, and then apply his hand, his bow, his string, his arrow and his motion accordingly. Our counsels goe a stray, because they are not rightly addressed, and have no fixed end. *No winde makes for him, that hath no intended port to saile unto*. As for me, I allow not greatly of that judgement, which some made of *Sophocles*, and to have concluded him

CHAPTER

I

Of the inconstancie of our actions

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

1

Of the inconstancie of our actions

sufficient in the managing of domesticall matters, against the accusation of his owne Sonne, only by the sight of one of his tragedies. Nor doe I commend the conjecture of the *Parians*, sent to reforme the *Milesians*, as sufficient to the consequence they drew thence. In visiting and surveying the Ile, they marked the Landes that were best husbanded, and observed the country houses that were best governed. And having registred the names of their owners; and afterward made an assembly of the Townsmen of the Citie, they named and instituted those owners as new Governours and Magistrates, judging and concluding, that being good husbands and carefull of their houshold affaires, they must consequently be so of publike matters. We are all framed of flaps and patches and of so shapelesse and diverse a contexture, that every peece and every moment playeth his part. And there is as much difference found betweene us and our selves, as there is betweene our selves and other. *Magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere.* Esteeme it a great matter, to play but one man.

→ Since ambition may teach men both valour, temperance, liberality, yea and justice: Sith covetousnesse may settle in the minde of a Shop-prentise-boy, brought up in ease and idlenesse, a dreadlesse assurance to leave his home-bred ease, and forgoe his place of education, and in a small barke to yeeld himselfe unto the mercy of blustering waves, merciless windes and wrathfull *Neptune*; and that it also teacheth discretion and wisdom; And that *Venus* her selfe ministreth resolution and hardinesse unto tender youth as yet subject to the discipline of the rod, and teacheth the ruthlesse Souldier, the soft and tenderly effeminate heart of women in their mothers laps.

# THE SECOND BOOKE.

*Hæc duo custodes furim transgressos jacentes,  
—Ad juvenem tenebris opæ puella vocat.*

—TIB. II. EL. I. 75.

The wench by stealeth her lodg'd guards having stript,  
By this guide, sole, i' th darke, to' th youker skipt.

## CHAPTER I

Of the inco-  
stancie of our  
actions

*It is no part of a well grounded judgement, simply  
to judge our selves by our exteriour actions: A man  
must thorowly sound himselfe, and dive into his heart,  
and there see by what wards or springs the motions  
stirre. But forasmuch as it is a hazardous and high  
enterprise, I would not have so many to meddle with  
it as doe.* p. 3

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Of Drunkenesse



*THE world is nothing but variety, and  
dissemblance. Vices are all alike, inas-  
much as they are all vices: And so  
doe haply the Stoikes meane it. But  
though they are equally vices, they  
are not equall vices; And that hee  
who hath started a hundred steps beyond the limits*

*Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum,*

—HOR. I. SAT. I. 107.

On this side, or beyond the which  
No man can hold a right true pitch,

is not of worse condition, than he that is ten steps  
short of it, is no whit credible: and that sacriledge  
is not worse than the stealing of a Colewort out of a  
Garden.

*Nec vincet ratio, tantundem ut peccet idemque*

*Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,*

*Et qui nocturnus divum sacra legerit.*—SAT. III. 115.

No reason can evict, as great or same sinne taints  
Him that breakes in anothers Garden tender plants,  
And him that steales by night things consecrate to Saints.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### II

### Of Drunken- nesse

There is as much diversity in that as in any other thing. The confusion of order and measure of crimes, is dangerous: Murtherers, Traitors and Tyrants, have too much gaine by it: it is no reason their conscience should be eased, in that some is either idle or lascivious, or lesse assiduous unto devotion. Every man poiseth upon his fellowes sinne, and elevates his owne. Even teachers doe often range it ill in my conceit. As *Socrates* said, that the chieffest office of wisdom, was to distinguish goods and evils. We others, to whom the best is ever in vice, should say the like of knowledge, to distinguish vices. Without which, and that very exact, both vertuous and wicked men remaine confounded and unknowen. Now drunkennesse amongst others, appeareth to mee a grose and brutish vice. The minde hath more part else where; and some vices there are, which (if it may lawfully be spoken) have a kinde of I wot not what generosity in them. Some there are, that have learning, diligence, valour, prudence, wit, cunning, dexterity, and subtlety joyned with them; whereas this is meere corporall, and terrestriall. And the grosest and rudest nation, that liveth amongst us at this day, is only that which keepeth it in credit. Other vices but alter and distract the understanding, whereas this utterly subverteth the same, and astonieth the body.

—*cum vini vis penetravit,  
Consequitur gravitas membrorum, præpediuntur  
Crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,  
Nant oculi, clamor, singultus, jurgia gliscunt.*

—LUCR. iii. 479.

When once the force of wine hath inly pierst,  
Limbes-heaviness is next, legs faine would goe,  
But reeling cannot, tongue drawles, mindes disperst,  
Eyes swimme, cries, hickups, brables grow.

The worst estate of man, is where he loseth the  
knowledge and government of himselfe. And

## THE SECOND BOOKE

amongst other things, it is said, that as must wine  
boylng and working in a vessel, workes and sends  
upward what ever it containeth in the bottome, so  
doth wine cause those that drinke excessively of it,  
worke up, and breake out their most concealed  
secrets.

CHAPTER  
II  
Of Drunken-  
nesse

—*tu sapientium*  
*Curus, et arcanum jocoso*  
*Consilium regeis Lyaro.*—HOR. iii. Od. xxi. 14.

Thou (wine-cup) doest by wine reveale  
The cares, which wise men would conceale,  
And close drifts, at a merry meale.

*Josephus* reporteth, that by making an Amba-  
sador to tipples-square, whom his enemies had sent  
unto him, he wrested all his secrets out of him.  
Neverthelesse *Augustus* having trusted *Lucius Piso*,  
that conquered *Thrace*, with the secretest affaires he  
had in hand, had never cause to be discontented with  
him: Nor *Tiberius* with *Cossus*, to whom he imparted  
all his seriousest counsels, although we know them  
both to have so given themselves to drinking of wine,  
that they were often faine to be carried from the  
Senat, and both were reputed notable drunkards.

—*Hesterno inflatum venas de more Lyaro.*  
—VIR. Buc. Ec. vi. 15.

Veines pufft up, as is used alway,  
By wine which was drunke yesterday.

And as faithfully as the complot and purpose to  
kill *Cæsar* committed unto *Cimber*, who would daily  
be drunke with quaffing of wine, as unto *Cassius*,  
that drunke nothing but water, whereupon he an-  
swered very pleasantly, *What? shall I beare a Tyrant,*  
*that am not able to beare wine?* We see our carousing  
spot German souldiers, when they are most plunged  
in their cups, and as drunke as Rats, to have perfect

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER II remembrance of their quarter, of the watch word, and of their files.

Of Drunken-  
nesse

—*nec facilis victoria de madidis, et  
Blasis, atque mero titubantibus.*—JUV. Sat. xv. 47.

Nor is the conquest easie of men sow'st,  
Lisping and reeling with wine they carow'st.

I would never have beleev'd so sound, so deepe and so excessive drunkennesse, had I not read in Histories, that *Attalus* having envited to sup with him (with intent to doe him some notable indignity) the same *Pausanias*, who for the same cause killed afterward *Philip* King of *Macedon*, (a King who by the eminent faire qualities that were in him, bore a testimonie of the education he had learned in the house and company of *Epaminondas*) made him so dead-drunke, that insensibly and without feeling, he might prostitute his beauty as the body of a common hedge-larlot, to Mulettiers, Groomes, and many of the abject servants of his house. And what a Lady (whom I much honour and highly esteeme) told mee, protesting, that neere *Burdeaux*, towards *Castres*, where her house is, a widdow Country-woman, reputed very chaste and honest, suspecting herselfe to be with childe, told her neighbours, that had she a husband, she should verily thinke she were with childe. But the occasion of this suspition encreasing more and more, and perceiving herselfe so big-bellied, that shee could no longer conceale it, she resolved to make the Parish-priest acquainted with it, whom she entreated to publish in the Church, that whosoever hee were, that was guilty of the fact, and would avow it, shee would freely forgive him, and if hee were so pleased, take him to her husband. A certaine swaine or hyne-boy of hers, emboldned by this proclamation, declared, how that having one holliday found her well-tiptled with



## THE SECOND BOOKE

wine, and so sound asleepe by the chimnie side, lying so fit and ready for him, that without a waking her he had the full use of her body. Whom she accepted for her husband, and both live together at this day. It is assured that antiquitie hath not greatly described this vice. The compositions of diverse Philosophers speake but sparingly of it. Yea, and some of the Stoikes deeme it not amisse for man sometimes to take his liquor roundly, and drinke drunke thereby to recreate his spirits.

CHAPTER  
II  
Of Drunken-  
nesse

*Hoc quoque virtutum quondam certamine magnum  
Socratem palmam promeruisse ferunt.*  
—Cor. Gal. El. i.

They say, in this too, *Socrates the wise*,  
And great in vertues combats, bare the prize.

*Cato* that strict censurer, and severe corrector of others, hath beene reproved for much drinking.

*Narratur et prisci Catonis  
Sæpe mero caluisse virtus.*  
—Hor. iii. Od. xxi. 11.

Tis said, by use of wine repeated,  
Old *Cato's* vertue oft was heated.

*Cyrus* that so-far renowned King, amongst his other commendations, meaning to preferre himselfe before his brother *Artaxerxes*, and get the start of him, braggeth, that he could drinke better, and tipple more than he. And amongst the best policed and chastest nations, the custome of drinking, and pledging of healths was much in use. I have heard *Scalpus*, that excellent Phisitian of *Paris* affirme that to preserve the vigor of our stomake from empairing, it is not amisse once a moneth to rowze up the same by this excesse of drinking: and lest it should grow dead and stupid therby to stirre it up. And it is written, that the *Persians*, after they had well applied, were wont to consult of their chiefest

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
II  
Of Drunken-  
nesse

affaires. My taste, my relish and my complexion, are sharper enemies unto this vice, than my discourse: For, besides that I captivate more easily my conceits under the auctoritie of ancient opinions, indeed I finde it to be a fond, a stupid and a base kinde of vice, but lesse malicious and hurtfull than others; all which shooke, and with a sharper edge wound publike societie. And if we cannot give our selves any pleasure, except (as they say) it cost us something; I finde this vice to be lesse chargeable unto our conscience than others; besides, it is not hard to be prepared, difficult to be found; a consideration not to be despised. A man well advanced in yeares and dignitie, amongst three principall commodities he told me to have remaining in life, counted this: and where shall a man more rightly finde-it, than amongst the naturall? But he tooke it ill, delicatenesse, and the choice of wines is therein to be avoided. If you prepare your voluptuousnes to drinke it with pleasure and daintily neat, you tie your selfe unto an inconvenience to drinke it other than is alwayes to be had. A man must have a milder, a loose and freer taste. To be a true drinker, a man should not have so tender and squeamish a palat. The Germans doe in a manner drinke equally of all sorts of wine with like pleasure. Their end is rather to gulpe it downe freely, than to tast it kindly. And to say truth they have it better cheape. Their voluptuousnesse is more plenteous and fuller. Secundarily, to drinke after the French manner, as two draughts and moderatly, is over much to restraine the favours of that God. There is more time and constancie required thereunto. Our forefathers were wont to spend whole nights in that exercise, yea often times they joyned whole long dayes unto them. And a man must proportion his ordinarie more large and firme. I have in my dayes

## THE SECOND BOOKE

seene a principall Lord ; a man of great employment and enterprises, and famous for good successe, who without straining himselfe, and eating but an ordinary meales-meat, was wont to drinke little lesse than five pottles of wine, yet at his rising seemed to be nothing distempered, but rather as we have found to our no small cost in managing of our affaires, over-wise and considerate. The pleasure of that, whereof we would make account in the course of our life ought to be employed longer space. It were necessary, as shop-boyes or labouring people, that we should refuse no occasion to drinke and continually to have this desire in our minde. It seemeth that wee daily shorten the use of this : and that in our houses, (as I have seene in mine infancie) breakefasts, nunchions, and beavers should be more frequent and often used, than now adayes they are. And should wee thereby in any sort proceed towards amendment ! No verily. But it may be, that we have much more given our selves over unto paillardise and all manner of luxurie than our fathers were. They are two occupations, that enter-hinder one another, in their vigor. On the one side, it hath impaired and weakned our stomacke, and on the other, sobrietie serveth to make us more jolly-quaint, lusty, and wanton for the exercise of love matters. It is a wonder to thinke on the strange tales I have heard my father report, of the chastitie of his times. He might well speake of it, as he that was both by art and nature proper for the use and solace of Ladies. He spake little and well, few words, but to the purpose, and was ever wont to entermixe some ornament taken from vulgar bookes, and above all, Spanish, amongst his common speeches : and of all Spanish Authors, none was more familiar unto him than *Marcus Aurelius*. His demeanour and carriage was ever milde, meeke, gentle, and very modest, and

CHAPTER  
II

Of Drunken-  
nesse



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

II

Of Drunken-  
nesse

above all, grave and stately. There is nothing he seemed to be more carefull of, than of his honesty, and observe a kinde of decencie of his person, and orderly decorum in his habits, were it on foot or on horsebacke. He was exceeding nice in performing his word or promise; And so strictly conscientious and obsequous in religion, that generally he seemed rather to encline toward superstition, than the contrary. Though he were but a little man, his courage and vigor was great: he was of an upright, and well proportioned stature, of a pleasing, cheerefull-looking countenance, of a swarthy hue, nimble addicted, and exquisitely nimble unto all noble and gentlemanlike exercises. I have seene some hollow staves of his filled with lead, which hee wont to use and exercise his armes withall, the better to enable himselfe to pitch the barre, to throw the sledge, to cast the pole and to play at fence: and shooes with leaden soles, which he wore to enure himselfe, to leape, to vault and to run. I may without blushing say, that in memory of himselfe, he hath left certaine petie miracles amongst us. I have seene him when hee was past threescore yeares of age mocke at all our sports, and outcountenance our youthfull pastimes, with a heavy furr'd Gowne about him to leap into his saddle; to make the pommada round about a Table upon his thumb; and seldome to ascend any staires without skipping three or foure steps at once. And concerning my discourse, hee was wont to say, that in a whole Province there was scarce any woman of qualitie, that had an ill name. Hee would often report strange familiarities, namely of his owne, with very honest women, without any suspicion at all. And protested very religiously, that when he was married, he was yet a pure Virgine; yet had he long time followed the warres beyond the Mountaines, and therein served long, whereof hee hath left a

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Journall-Booke of his owne collecting, wherein hee hath particularly noted, whatsoever happened day by day worthy the observation, so long as he served, both for the publike and his particular use. And he was well stricken in yeares, when he tooke a wife. For returning out of *Italie*, in the yeare of our Lord, one thousand five hundred eight and twenty, and being full three and thirty yeares old, by the way hee chose himselfe a wife. But come we to our drinking againe. The incommodities of age, which need some helpe and refreshing, might with some reason beget in me a desire or longing of this faculty: for, it is in a man the last pleasure, which the course of our years stealeth upon us. Good fellowes say, that naturall heat is first taken in our feet: That properly belongeth to infancie. From thence it ascendeth unto the middle region, where it is setled and continueth a long time: and in mine opinion, there produceth the only true, and moving pleasures of this corporall life. Other delight and sensualities in respect of that, doe but sleepe. In the end, like unto a vapour, which by little and little exhalet, and mounteth aloft, it comes unto the throat, and there makes her last bode. Yet could I never conceive, how any man may either increase or prolong the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, and in his imagination frame an artificial appetite, and against nature. My stomacke could not well reach so farre: it is very much troubled to come to an end of that which it takes for his need. My constitution is, to make an accompt of drinking, but to succeed meat, and therefore doe I ever make my last draught the greatest. And forasmuch as in age, we have the rooffe of our mouthes commonly furred with rhume, or distempered, distasted and altered through some other evill constitution, wine seemeth better unto us and of a quicker relish.

CHAPTER

II

Of Drunken-  
nesse



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### II

### Of Drunken- nesse

according as our pores be either more or lesse open and washed. At least I seldome relish the same very well, except it be the first draught I take. *Anacharsis* wondered to see the Græcians drinke in greater glasses at the end of their meales, than in the beginning. It was (as I imagine) for the very same reason, that the Germans doe it, who never begin to carouse, but when they have well fed. *Plato* forbiddeth children to drinke any wine, before they be eightene yeeres of age, and to be drunke before they come to forty. But to such as have once attained the age of fortie, he is content to pardon them, if they chance to delight themselves with it, and alloweth them somewhat largely to blend the influence of *Dionysius* in their banquets, that good God, who bestoweth cheerfulness upon men, and youth unto aged men, who layeth and aswageth the passions of the minde, even as yron is made flexible by the fire: and in his profitable lawes drinking-meetings or quaffing companies as necessary and commendable (alwaies provided there be a chiefe leader amongst them to containe and order them) drunkennesse being a good and certaine tryall of everie mans nature; and therewithall proper to give aged men the courage to make merry in dancing and in musicke: things allowable and profitable, and such as they dare not undertake being sober and settled. That wine is capable to supply the mind with temperance, and the bodie with health. Notwithstanding, these restrictions, partly borrowed of the Carthaginians, please him well. Let those forbear it that are going about any expedition of warre. Let every magistrate, and all judges abstain from it at what time they are to execute their charge, and to consult of publike affaires. Let none bestow the day in drinking, as the time that is due unto more serious negotiations, nor the nights wherein a man intendeth

## THE SECOND BOOKE

to get children. It is reported, that *Stilpo*, the **CHAPTER**  
 Philosopher, finding himselfe surcharged with age, **II**  
 did purposely hasten his end, by drinking of pure **Of Drunken-**  
 wine. The like cause (though not wittingly) did **nesse**  
 also suffocate the vital forces, crazed through old age  
 of the Philosopher *Arcesilaus*. But it is an old and  
 pleasant question, whether a wisemans mind were  
 like to yeeld unto the force of wine.

*Si unita adhibet vim sapientie.*

—*Od.* xxviii. 4.

If unresisted force it bends,  
 Gainst wisdom which it selfe defends.

Unto what vanity doth the good opinion we have  
 of our selves provoke us? The most temperate and  
 perfectest minde of the world, findes it too great a  
 taske to keep herselfe upright, lest she fall by her  
 owne weaknesse. Of a thousand there is not one  
 perfectly righteous and settled but one instant of  
 her life, and question might be made, whether  
 according to her naturall condition she might at  
 any time be so. But to joyne constancie unto it  
 is her last perfection: I meane if nothing should  
 shooke her: which a thousand accidents may doe.  
*Lucretius* that famous Poet, may Philosophie and  
 bandie at his pleasure: Loe where he lieth senselesse  
 of an amorous potion. Thinkes any man, that an  
 Apoplexie cannot as soone astonish *Socrates*, as a  
 poore labouring man? Some of them have by the  
 force of a sicknesse forgot their owne names, and  
 a slight hurt have overthrowne the judgement of  
 others. Let him be as wise as he can, in the end  
 he is but a man: what is more fraile, more miser-  
 able, or more vaine? Wisdom forceth not our  
 naturall conditions.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER II Of Drunken- nesse

*Sudores itaque, et pallorem existere toto  
Corpore, et infringi linguam vocemque aboriri  
Caligare oculos, sonere aures, succidere artus,  
Denique concidere ex animi terrore videmus.*

—LUCR. iii. 155.

We see therefore, palenesse and sweats ore-grow,  
Our bodies, tongues doe falter, voyce doth breake,  
Eyes dazle, eares buzze, joints doe shrinke below,  
Lastly we swoune by hart-fright, terrours weake.

He must [s]eele his eyes against the blow that threatneth him, being neere the brimme of a percipise, he must cry out like a child. Nature having purposed to reserve these light markes of her authoritie unto herselfe, inexpugnable unto our reason, and to the Stoicke vertue: to teach him his mortalitie, and our insipiditie. He waxeth pale for feare, he blusheth for shame, he groaneth feeling the cholike, if not with a desperate and low-roaring voyce, yet with a low, smothered and hoarse-sounding noyse.

*Humani à se nihil alienum putat.*

—TER. *Heaut.* act i. sce. i. 25.

He thinkes, that nothing strange be can,  
To him, that longs to any man.

Giddie-headed Poets, that faine what they list, dare not so much as discharge their *Heroes* from teares.

*Sic fatur lachrymans, classique immitit habenas.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vi. 1.

So said he weeping, and so saide,  
Himselfe hand to the sterage laide.

Let it suffice him to bridle his affections, and moderate his inclinations; for, it is not in him to beare them away. *Plutarke* himselfe, who is so perfect and excellent a judge of humane actions,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

seeing *Brutus* and *Torquatus* to kill their owne children, remaineth doubtfull, whether vertue could reach so farre, and whether such men were not rather moved by some other passion. *All actions beyond the ordinarie limits, are subject to some sinister interpretation:* Forasmuch as our taste doth no more come unto that which is above it, than to that which is under it. Let us omit that other sect, which maketh open profession of fiercenes. But when in the very same sect, which is esteemed the most demisse, we heare the bragges of *Metrodorus*: *Occupavite, Fortuna, atque cepi: omnesque aditus tuos interclusi ut ad me aspirare non posses* (*Met. Cic. Tusc. Quest. 5*). *Fortune, I have prevented, caught, and overtaken thee: I have mured and ramd up all thy passagis, whereby thou mightest attaine unto mee.* When *Anaxarcus*, by the appointment of *Nicocreon*, the tyrant of *Cipres*, being laid along in a trough of stone, and smoten with yron sledges, ceaseth not to crie out, streeke, smite, and breake; it is not *Anaxarcus*, it is but his vaile you martyr so. When we heare our martyrs, in the midst of a flame crie aloud unto the Tyrant, *this side is rosted enough, chop it, eat it, it is full rosted, now begin on the other.* When in *Iosephus* wee heare a childe all to rent with biting snippers, and pierced with the breath of *Antiochus*, to defie him to death, crie with a lowde-assured and undismaid voyce; Tyrant thou locest time, loe I am still at mine ease; where is that smarting paine, where are those torments, wherewith whilom thou didst so threaten me? My constancie doth more trouble thee, than I have feeling of thy crueltie: Oh faint hearted varlet, doest thou yeeld when I gather strength? Make mee to faint or shrink, cause me to moane or lament, force me to yeeld and sue for grace if thou canst; encourage thy

CHAPTER  
II  
Of Drunken-  
nesse

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER <sup>II</sup> satellities, harten thy executioners; loe how they droope and have no more power; arme them, strengthen them, flesh them. Verely wee must needs confesse there is some alteration, and some furie (how holy soever) in those mindes. When we come unto these Stoick evasions; I had rather be furious than voluptuous: the saying of *Antisthenes*. *Μακρὴν μᾶλλον ἢ ἡσθεῖν* (Antist. *DIAGEN. LAERT.* vi. c. 1), *Rather would I be mad, than merry*. When *Sextius* telleth us, he had rather be surprised with paine, than sensuality; when *Epicurus* undertakes to have the goute, to wantonize and faune upon him, and refusing ease and health, with a hearty cheerefulnesse defie all evils, and scornefully despising lesse sharpe griefes, disdainyng to grapple with them, he blithely desireth and calleth for sharper, more forcible, and worthy of him:

*Spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia volis  
Optat aprum aut fulvum descendere monte leonem:*

—VIRG. *Æn.* iv. 158.

He wisht, mongst hartlesse beasts some foming Bore,  
Or mountaine-Lyon would come downe and rore.

Who would not judge them to be pranks of a courage removed from his wonted seate? Our minde cannot out of her place attaine so high. She must quit it and raise her selfe aloft, and taking the bridle in her teeth, carry and transport her man so farre, that afterward hee wonder at himselfe, and rest amazed at his actions. As in exploits of warre, the heat and earnestnesse of the fight doth often provoke the noble minded souldiers, to adventure on so dangerous passages, that afterward being better advised, they are the first to wonder at it. As also Poets, are often surprised and rapt with admiration at their owne labours, and forget the trace, by which they past so happy a career. It is that, which some



## THE SECOND BOOKE

terme a fury or madnesse in them. And as *Plato* saith, that a setled and reposed man, doth in vaine knocke at Poesies gate. *Aristotle* likewise saith, that no excellent minde is freely exempted from some or other entermixture of folly. And he hath reason, to call any starting or extraordinarie conceit (how commendable soever) and which exceedeth our judgement and discourse, folly. Forsomuch as *wisdom*e, is an orderly and regular managing of the minde, and which she addresseth with measure, and conducteth with proportion; And take her owne word for it. *Plato* disputeth thus; that the facultie of prophesying and divination is far above us, and that when wee treat it, we must be besides our selves: our wisdom must be darkened and over shadowed by sleepe, by sicknesse, or by drowzinesse; or by some celestiall fury, ravished from her owne seat.

CHAPTER  
II  
Of Drunken-  
nesse

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

*A custome of the Ile of Cea*

**I**F, as some say, to philosophate be to doubt; with much more reason, to rave and fantastiquize, as I doe, must necessarily be to doubt: For, to enquire and debate, belongeth to a schooller, and to resolve appertaines to a cathedrall master. But know, my cathedrall, it is the authoritie of God's divine will, that without any contradiction doth sway us, and hath her ranke beyond these humane and vaine contestations. *Philip* being with an armed hand entred the Countrey of *Peloponnesus*, some one told *Damidas*, the Lacedemonians were like to endure much, if they sought not to reobtaine his lost favour. Oh varlet as thou art (answered he.) And what can they suffer, who have no feare at all of

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

**AFTER** death? *Agis* being demanded, how a man might do to live free, answered; *Despising and contemning to die*. These and a thousand like propositions, which concur in this purpose, do evidently inferre some thing beyond the patient expecting of death it selfe, to be suffered in this life: witnesse the Lacedemonian child, taken by *Antigonus*, and sold for a slave, who urged by his master, to performe some abject service; Thou shalt see (said he) whom thou hast bought; for, it were a shame for me to serve, having libertie so neere at hand, and therewithall threw himselfe headlong downe from the top of the house. *Antipater*, sharply threatning the Lacedemonians, to make them yeeld to a certaine request of his; they answered, shouldest thou menace us worse than death, we will rather die. And to *Philip*, who having written unto them, that he would hinder all their enterprises; What? (say they) wilt thou also hinder us from dying? That is the reason, why some say, that the wiseman liveth as long as he ought, and not so long as he can. And that the favourablest gift, nature hath bequeathed us, and which removeth all meanes from us to complaine of our condition, is, that she hath left us the key of the fields. She hath appointed but one entrance unto life, but many a thousand wayes out of it: *Well may we want ground to live upon, but never ground to die in*. As *Boiocatus* answered the Romanes. Why dost thou complaine against this world? It doth not containe thee: If thou livest in paine and sorrow, thy base courage is the cause of it, To die there wanteth but will.

*Ubique mors est: optimè hoc cavit Deus,  
Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest:  
At nemo mortem: mille ad hanc aditus patent.*

—SEN. *Theb.* act i. sce. 1.

Each where death is: God did this well purvay,  
No man but can from man life take away,  
But none barr's death, to it lies many 'a way.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

And it is not a receipt to one malady alone; **CHAPTER**  
*Death is a remedy against all evils:* It is a most  
 assured haven, never to be feared, and often to be  
 sought: All comes to one period, whether man make  
 an end of himselfe, or whether he endure it; whether  
 he run before his day, or whether he expect it:  
 whence soever it come, it is ever his owne, where  
 ever the threed be broken, it is all there, it's the end  
 of the web. The voluntariest death, is the fairest.  
*Life dependeth on the will of others, death on ours.*  
 In nothing should we so much accommodate our  
 selves to our humors, as in that. Reputation doth  
 nothing concerne such an enterprise, it is folly to  
 have any respect unto it. *To live is to serve, if the*  
*libertie to dye be wanting.* The common course of  
 curing any infirmitie, is ever directed at the charge of  
 life: we have incisions made into us, we are cauter-  
 ized, we have limbes cut and mangled, we are let  
 blood, we are dieted. Goe we but one step further,  
 we need no more physicke, we are perfectly whole.  
 Why is not our jugular or throat-veine as much at  
 our command as the mediane? To extreme sick-  
 nesses, extreme remedies. *Servius* the Grammarian  
 being troubled with the gowt, found no better  
 meanes to be rid of it, than to apply poison to  
 mortifie his legs. He cared not whether they were  
*Podagrees* or no, so they were insensible. God  
 giveth us sufficient privilege, when he placeth us in  
 such an estate, as life is worse than death unto us.  
*It is weaknesse to yeeld to evils, but folly to foster*  
*them.* The Stoikes say, it is a convenient naturall  
 life, for a wise man, to forgoe life, although he abound  
 in all happinesse; if he doe it opportunely: And for  
 a foole to prolong his life, albeit he be most miser-  
 able, provided he be in most part of things, which  
 they say to be according unto nature. As I offend  
 not the lawes made against theeves, when I cut mine

III  
 A custome of  
 the Ile of  
 Cea

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

P
T
E
R
 
o
w
n
e
 
o
w
n
e
 
p
u
r
s
e
 
a
n
d
 
c
a
r
r
y
 
a
w
a
y
 
m
i
n
e
 
o
w
n
e
 
g
o
o
d
s
; 
n
o
r
 
o
f
 
d
e
s
t
r
o
y
e
r
s
 
w
h
e
n
 
I
 
b
u
r
n
e
 
m
i
n
e
 
o
w
n
e
 
w
o
o
d
: 
s
o
 
a
m
 
I
 
n
o
t
h
i
n
g
 
t
i
e
d
 
u
n
t
o
 
l
a
w
e
s
 
m
a
d
e
 
a
g
a
i
n
s
t
 
m
u
r
d
e
r
s
; 
i
f
 
I
 
d
e
p
r
i
v
e
 
m
y
 
s
e
l
f
e
 
o
f
 
m
i
n
e
 
o
w
n
e
 
l
i
f
e
. 
*Hegesias*
 
w
a
s
 
w
o
n
t
 
t
o
 
s
a
y
, 
t
h
a
t
 
e
v
e
n
 
a
s
 
t
h
e
 
c
o
n
d
i
o
n
 
o
f
 
l
i
f
e
, 
s
o
 
s
h
o
l
d
 
t
h
e
 
q
u
a
l
i
t
y
 
d
e
a
t
h
 
t
h
e
 
q
u
a
l
i
t
y
 
d
e
p
e
n
d
 
o
u
r
 
e
l
e
c
t
i
o
n
. 
A
n
d
 
*Diogenes*
 
m
e
e
t
i
n
g
 
w
i
t
h
 
t
h
e
 
P
h
i
l
o
s
o
p
h
e
r
 
t
h
e
 
P
h
i
l
o
s
o
p
h
e
r
 
w
i
t
h
 
t
h
e
 
d
r
o
p
s
i
e
, 
a
n
d
 
t
h
e
r
e
 
c
a
r
r
i
e
d
 
i
n
 
a
l
l
i
t
t
 
h
i
m
; 
A
l
l
 
h
a
i
l
e
 
*Diogenes*
: 
A
n
d
 
t
o
 
t
h
e
 
n
o
 
h
e
a
l
t
, 
(r
e
p
l
i
e
d
 
*Diogenes*
)
 
t
h
a
t
 
e
n
d
 
t
o
 
l
i
v
e
 
i
n
 
s
o
 
w
r
e
t
h
e
d
 
a
n
 
e
s
t
e
. 
T
r
u
e
 
i
t
 
i
s
, 
t
h
a
t
 
a
 
w
h
i
l
e
 
a
f
t
e

## THE SECOND BOOKE

cretion and impatience that hastneth our way. No accidents can force a man to turne his backe from lively vertue: She seeketh out evils and sorrowes as her nourishment. The threats of fell tyrants, tortures and torments; executioners and torturers, doe minnate and quicken her.

CHAPTER  
III  
A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

*Daris ut illos tonas bipennibus  
Nigra feraci frondis in Alcido  
Per damna, per caedes, ab ipso  
Ducit opes animamque ferro.*—HOR. IV. OD. IV. 57.

As holme-tree; doth with hard axt lopt  
On hills with many holme-trees topt,  
From loose, from cuttings it doth feele,  
Courage and store rise ev'n from steele.

And as the other saith.

*Non est ut putas virtus, pater,  
Timere vitam, sed magis ingentibus  
Obstare, nec se vertere ac retro dare.*  
—SEN. THEB. act I. sce. 1.

Sir, ti's not vertue, as you understand,  
To feare life, but grosse mischief to withstand,  
Not to retire, turne backe, at any hand.

*Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere mortem.  
Fortius ille facit, qui miser esse potest.*  
—MART. XI. EPI. LVII. 15.

'Tis easie in crosse chance death to despise:  
He that can wretched be, doth stronger rise.

It is the part of cowardlinesse, and not of vertue,  
to seek to squat it selfe in some hollow-lurking hole,  
or to hide her selfe under some massie tombe, thereby  
to shun the strokes of fortune. She never forsakes  
her course, nor leaves her way, what stormie weather  
soever crosse-her.

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,  
Imparidam ferient ruinæ.*—HOR. III. OD. III. 7.

If the world broken should upon her fall,  
The ruines may her strike, but not appall.

The avoyding of other inconveniences doth most



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER commonly drive us into this, yea, sometimes the  
 III shunning of death, makes us to run into it.

A custome of  
 the Ile of  
 Cea

*Hic, rogo, non furor est, ne moriari, mori?*

—MART. ii. *Epig.* lxxx. 2.

Madnesse is't not, say I,  
 To dye, lest you should dye?

As those who for feare of a break-neck downefall,  
 doe headlong cast themselves into it.

—*multos in summa pericula misit*  
*Venturi timor ipse mali: fortissimus ille est,*  
*Qui promptus metuenda pati, si cominus instent,*  
*Et differre potest.*—LUCAN. vii. 104.

The very feare of ils to come, hath sent  
 Many to mighty dangers: strongest they,  
 Who fearfull things t'endure are ready bent  
 If they confront them, yet can them delay.

—*usque adeo mortis formidine, vitæ*  
*Percipit humanos odium, lucisque videndæ,*  
*Ut sibi consciscant mærenti pectore lethum,*  
*Obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem.*

—LUCR. iii. 79.

So far by feare of death, the hate of life,  
 And seeing-light, doth men as men possesse,  
 They grieving kill themselves to end the strife,  
 Forgetting, feare is spring of their distresse.

*Plato* in his lawes, alots him that hath deprived  
 his neerest and deerest friend of life (that is to  
 say, himselfe) and abridged him of the destinies  
 course, not constrained by any publike judgement,  
 nor by any lewd and inevitable accident of fortune,  
 nor by any intolerable shame or infamy, but through  
 basenesse of minde, and weaknesse of a faint-fearfull  
 courage, to have a most ignominious, and ever-re-  
 proachfull buriall. And the opinion which disdaineth  
 our life, is ridiculous: For, in fine it is our being. It  
 is our all in all. Things that have a nobler and richer  
 being, may accuse ours: But it is against nature, we  
 should despise, and carelesly set our selves at naught:



## THE SECOND BOOKE

It is a particular infirmitie, and which is not seene in any other creature, to hate and disdaine himselfe. It is of like vanitie, that we desire to be other, than we are. The fruit of such a desire doth not concerne us, forasmuch as it contradicteth and hindereth it selfe in it selfe. He that desireth to be made of a man an Angell, doth nothing for himselfe: He should be nothing the better by it: And being no more, who shall rejoyce or conceive any gladnesse of this change or amendment for him?

CHAPTER  
III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

*Debet enim miserè cui forte ægreque futurum est,  
Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cum male possit  
Accidere.*—*Ib.* 905.

For he, who shall perchance prove miserable,  
And speed but ill, should then himselfe be able  
To be himselfe, when ils may chance unstable.

The security, indolencie, impassibility, and privation of this lives evils, which we purchase at the price of death, bring us no commoditie at all. *In vaine doth he avoid warre, that cannot injoy peace; and bootlesse doth he shun paine, that hath no meanes to feele rest.* Amongst those of the first opinion, great questioning hath beene, to know what occasions are sufficiently just and lawfull to make a man undertake the killing of himselfe, they call that *εὐλογον ἔσθυσιν* (ALEX. APHROD.), a reasonable orderly outlet. For, although they say, a man must often dye for slight causes, since these that keepe us alive, are not very strong; yet is some measure required in them. There are certaine fantastick and braine-sicke humors, which have not only provoked particular men, but whole Nations to defeat themselves. I have heretofore alleaged some examples of them: And moreover we read of certaine Milesian virgins, who upon a furious conspiracie hanged themselves one after another, untill such time as the Magistrate

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
III  
A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

provided for it, appointing that such as should be found so hanged, should with their owne halters be dragged naked thorow the streets of the Citie. When *Threicion* perswadeth *Cleomenes* to kill himselfe, by reason of the bad and desperate estate his affaires stood in, and having escaped a more honourable death in the battell which he had lately lost, moveth him to accept of this other, which is second to him in honour, and give the Conqueror no leisure to make him endure, either another death, or else a shamefull life. *Cleomenes* with a Lacedemonian and Stoike courage, refuseth this counsell as base and effeminate: It is a receipt, (saith he) which can never faile me, and whereof a man should make no use, so long as there remaineth but one inch of hope: That to live, is sometimes constancie and valour; That he will have his very death serve his Countrie, and by it, shew an act of honour and of vertue. *Threicion* then beleaved, and killed himselfe. *Cleomenes* did afterwards as much, but not before he had tried and assayed the utmost power of fortune. All inconveniences are not so much worth, that a man should dye to eschue them. Moreover, there being so many sudden changes, and violent alterations in humane things, it is hard to judge in what state or point we are justly at the end of our hope:

*Sperat et in sæva victus gladiator arena,  
—Sic licet infesto pollice turba minax.*

The Fencer hopes, though downe in lists he lye,  
And people with turn'd hand threat's he must dye.

All things, saith an ancient Proverb, may a man hope for, so long as he liveth: yea, but answereth *Seneca*, wherefore shall I rather have that in minde; that fortune can do all things for him that is living, than this; that fortune hath no power at all over him, who knoweth how to dye? *Joseph* is seene

## THE SECOND BOOKE

engaged in so an apparent-approaching danger, with a whole nation against him, that according to humane reason, there was no way for him to escape; notwithstanding being (as he saith) counselled by a friend of his, at that instant, to kill himselfe, it fell out well for him to opinionate himselfe yet in hope: for fortune, beyond all mans discourse, did so turne and change that accident, that without any inconvenience at all, he saw himselfe delivered: whereas on the contrarie *Brutus* and *Cassius*, by reason of the downfall and rashnesse, wherewith before due time and occasion, they killed themselves; did utterly lose the reliques of the Roman libertie, whereof they were protectors. The Lord of *Anguien* in the battell of *Seriuolles*, as one desperate of the combats successe, which on his side went to wracke, attempted twice to run himselfe thorow the throat with his rapier, and thought by precipitation to bereave himselfe of the enjoying of so notable a victorie. I have seene a hundred Hares save themselves even in the Grey-bounds jawes: *Aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit* (*Sen. Epist. xiii.*). *Some man hath out-lived his Hang-man.*

CHAPTER  
III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

*Multa dies variusque labor mutabilis ævi  
Rettulit in melius, multos alterna revisens  
Læsit, et in solido rursus fortuna locavit.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* xi. 426.

Time, and of turning age the divers straine,  
Hath much to better brought, fortunes turn'd traine,  
Hath many mock't, and set them fast againe.

*Plinie* saith, there are but three sorts of sicknesses, which to avoid, a man may have some colour of reason to kill himselfe. The sharpest of all is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is there stopped. *Seneca*, those onely, which for long time disturbe and distract the offices of the minde. To avoid a worse death, some are of opinion, a man should take it at his



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

III

the custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

owne pleasure. *Democritus* chiefe of the *Ætolians*, being led captive to *Rome*, found meanes to escape by night: but being pursued by his keepers, rather than he would be taken againe, ran himselfe thorow with his Sword. *Antinoüs* and *Theodotus*, their Citie of *Epirus* being by the Romans reduced unto great extremitie, concluded, and perswaded all the people to kill themselves. But the counsell, rather to yeeld, having prevailed: they went to seeke their owne death, and rushed amidst the thickest of their enemies, with an intention, rather to strike, than to ward themselves. The Iland of *Gosa*, being some yeares since surprised and over-run by the Turkes, a certaine Sicilian therein dwelling, having two faire daughters ready to be married, killed them both with his owne hands, together with their mother, that came in to help them. That done, running out into the streets, with a crosse-bow in one hand, and a caliver in the other, at two shoots, slew the two first Turkes that came next to his gates, then resolutely drawing his Sword, ran furiously among them; by whom he was suddenly hewen in peeces: Thus did he save himselfe from slavish bondage, having first delivered his owne from it. The Jewish women, after they had caused their children to be circumcized, to avoid the crueltie of *Antiochus*, did headlong precipitate themselves and them unto death. I have heard it credibly reported, that a Gentleman of good qualitie, being prisoner in one of our Gaoles, and his parents advertized that he should assuredly be condemned, to avoid the infamie of so reproachfull a death, appointed a Priest to tell him, that the best remedy for his deliverie, was to recommend himselfe to such a Saint, with such and such a vow, and to continue eight dayes without taking any sustenance, what faintnesse or weaknesse soever he should feele in himselfe. He beleevved them, and so without think-

## THE SECOND BOOKE

ing on it, was delivered both of life and danger. *Nicomachus* perswading *Libo* his nephew to kill himselfe, rather than to expect the stroke of justice, told him, that for a man to preserve his owne life, to put it into the hands of such as three or foure dayes after should come and seek it, was even to dispatch another mans businesse, and that it was no other, than for one to serve his enemies, to preserve his head, therewith to make food. We read in the Bible, that *Nicomachus* the persecutor of Gods Law, having sent his Satellites to apprehend the good old man *Rufinus*, for the honour of his vertue, surnamed the father of the *Jeremes*: when that good man saw by other meanes left him, his gate being burned, and his enemies ready to lay hold on him, chose, rather than to fall into the hands of such villaines, and be shamefully abused, against the honour of his place, to die nobly, and so smote himselfe with his owne sword: but by reason of his haste, having not thoroughly slaine himselfe, he ran to throw himselfe downe from an high wall, amongst the throng of people, which making him roome, he fell right upon his head. At which notwithstanding, perceiving life to remaine in him, he was sent for againe, and getting up on his feet, was covered with blood, and beset with strokes, being carryed through the prison, came to a craggy place, where the peevish women were to carry him off, by reason of his wounds, with both his hands thrust out his guts, and crying and squeaking for paine, and amongst such as pursued him, crying and testifying the vengeance of God to fall on the authors of all violences committed against the Church, the most in mine opinion to be recorded, is that which is ordered against the chastitie of a woman: forasmuch as there is naturally some covetousness mixt with it: And therefore the

CHAPTER  
III  
A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

dissent cannot fully enough be joyned thereunto:  
And it seemeth, that force is in some sort, inter-  
mixed with some will. The ecclesiasticall Storie  
hath in especiall reverence, sundry such examples  
of devout persons, who called for death to warrant  
them from the out-rages which some tyrants prepared  
against their religion and consciences. *Pelagia* and  
*Sophronia*, both canonized; the first, together with  
her mother and sisters, to escape the outragious  
rapes of some souldiers, threw her selfe into a river;  
the other, to shun the force of *Maxentius* the Em-  
perour, slew her selfe. It shall peradventure redound  
to our honour in future ages, that a wise Author of  
these dayes, and namely a Parisian, doth labour to  
perswade the Ladies of our times, rather to hazard  
upon any resolution, than to embrace so horrible a  
counsell of such desperation. I am sorie, that to  
put amongst his discourses, he knew not the good  
saying I learnt of a woman at *Tholouse*, who had  
passed through the hands of some souldiers: God be  
praised (said she) that once in my life, I have had  
my belly-full without sinne. Verily these cruelties  
are not worthy of the French curtesie. And God  
be thanked, since this good advertisement; our ayre  
is infinitely purged of them. Let it suffice, that in  
doing it, they say, *No, and take it*, following the  
rule of *Marot*. The historie is very full of such,  
who a thousand wayes have changed a lingering-  
toylsome life with death. *Lucius Aruntius* killed  
himselfe (as he said) to avoid what was past, and  
eschue what was to come. *Granius Sylvanus*, and  
*Statius Proximus*, after they had beene pardoned by  
*Nero*, killed themselves, either because they scorned  
to live by the favour of so wicked a man, or because  
they would not another time be in danger of a second  
pardon, seeing his so easie-yeelding unto suspicions  
and accusations against honest men. *Spargapises*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

came unto Queene *Tomiris*, prisoner by the law of warre unto *Cyrus*, employed the first favour that *Cyrus* did him, by setting him free, to kill himselfe, as he who never pretended to reap other fruit by his liberty, than to revenge the infamie of his taking upon himselfe. *Boges* a Governour for King *Xerxes* in the country of *Ionia*, being besieged by the *Athenians* army under the conduct of *Cymon*, refused the composition, to returne safely, together with his goods and treasure into *Asia*, as one impatient to survive the losse of what his Master had given him in charge; and after he had stoutly and even to the last extremity, defended the Towne, having no manner of victuals left him; first he cast all the gold, and treasure, with whatsoever he imagined the enemy might reap any commoditie by, into the river *Strimon*; Then having caused a great pile of wood to be set on fire, and made all women, children, concubines and servants to be stripped and throwne into the flames, afterward ran-in himselfe, where all were burned. *Ninachetuen* a lord in the *East Indies*, having had an inkling of the King of *Portugales* Viceroyes deliberation to dispossesse him, without any apparant cause, of the charge he had in *Malaca*, for to give it unto the King of *Campar*; of himselfe resolved upon this resolution: First, he caused an high scaffold to be set up, somewhat longer than broad, underpropped with pillars, all gorgeously hangd with rich tapestrie, strewed with flowers, and adorned with pretious perfumes: Then having put-on a sumptuous long roabe of cloth of gold, richly beset with store of pretious stones of inestimable worth, he came out of the palace into the street, and by certaine steps ascended the scaffold, in one of the corners whereof, was a pile of aromaticall wood set afire. All the people of the Citie were flocked together, to see what the meaning of such unaccus-

CHAPTER  
III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

tomed preparation might tend unto. *Ninachetuen* with an undanted-bold, yet seeming-discontented countenance, declared the manifold obligations, which the *Portugal* Nation was endebted unto him for; expostulated how faithfully and truly he had dealt in his charge; that having so often witnessed, armed at all assayes for others; that his honour was much dearer unto him than life, he was not to forsake the care of it for himselfe; that fortune refusing him all meanes to oppose himselfe against the injurie intended against him, his courage, at the least willed him to remove the feeling thereof, and not become a laughing stocke unto the people, and a triumph to men of lesse worth than himselfe: which words as he was speaking, he cast himselfe into the fire. *Sextilia* the wife of *Scaurus* and *Præcia* wife unto *Labeo*, to encourage their husbands, to avoid the dangers, which pressed them, wherein they had no share (but in regard of the interest of their conjugal affection) voluntarily engaged their life, in this extreme necessitie, to serve them, as an example to imitate, and company to regard. What they performed for their husbands; *Cocceius Nerva* acted for his countrie, and though lesse profitable, yet equal in true love. That famous Interpreter of the lawes, abounding in riches, in reputation, in credit, and flourishing in health about the Emperour, had no other cause to rid himselfe of life, but the compassion of the miserable estate, wherein he saw the Romane common-wealth. There is nothing can be added unto the daintinesse of *Fulvius* wives death, who was so inward with *Augustus*. *Augustus* perceiving he had blabbed a certaine secret of importance, which he on trust had revealed unto him; one morning comming to visit him, he seemed to frowne upon him for it; whereupon as guilty, he returneth home, as one full of despaire, and in piteous sort told his wife, that

## THE SECOND BOOKE

sithence he was false into such a mischief, he was  
 resolved to kill himselfe; shee as one no whit dis-  
 maied, replied unto him; Thou shalt doe but right,  
 since having so often experienced the incontinence  
 of my tongue, thou hast not learnt to beware of it,  
 yet give me leave to kill my selfe first, and without  
 more ado, ran her selfe thorow with a sword. *Vibius*  
*Firius* despairing of his Cities safetie, besieged by  
 the Romans, and mistrusting their mercie; in their  
 Senates last consultation, after many remonstrances  
 employed to that end, concluded, that the best and  
 fairest way, was to escape fortune by their owne  
 hands. The very enemies should have them in more  
 honour, and *Hanniball* might perceive what faithfull  
 friends he had forsaken: Enviting those that should  
 allow of his advice, to come, and take a good supper,  
 which was prepared in his house, where after great  
 cheere, they should drinke together whatsoever should  
 be presented unto him: a drinke that shall deliver  
 our bodies from torments, free our mindes from  
 injuries, and release our eyes and eares from seeing  
 and hearing so many horrible mischiefes, which the  
 conquered must endure at the hands of most cruell  
 and offended conquerors: I have (quoth he) taken  
 order, that men fit for that purpose shall be ready,  
 when we shall be expired, to cast us into a great  
 burning pile of wood. Diverse approved of his high  
 resolution, but few did imitate the same. Seven and  
 twentie Senators followed him; who after they had  
 attempted to stifle so irkesome, and suppress so  
 terror-moving a thought, with quaffing and swilling  
 of wine, they ended their repast by this deadly messe:  
 and entre-embracing one another, after they had in  
 common deplored and bewailed their countries mis-  
 fortunes; some went home to their owne houses,  
 othersome stayed there, to be entombed with *Vibius*  
 in his owne fire; whose death was so long and lingring,

CHAPTER

III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

forsomuch as the vapor of the wine having possessed their veines, and slowed the effect and operation of the poyson, that some lived an houre after they had seene their enemies enter *Capua*, which they caried the next day after, and incurred the miseries, and saw the calamities, which at so high a rate they had sought to eschue. *Taurca Jubellius*, another citizen there, the Consull *Fulvius* returning from that shameful slaughter, which he had committed of 225. Senators, called him churlishly by his name, and having arrested him; Command (quoth he) unto him, that I also be massacred after so many others, that so thou maist brag to have murdered a much more valiant man than ever thou wast. *Fulvius*, as one enraged, disdainig him; forasmuch as he had newly received letters from *Rome* contrarie to the inhumanitie of his execution, which inhibited him to proceed any further; *Jubellius* continuing his speech, said; sithence my Countrie is taken, my friends butchered, and having with mine owne hands slaine my wife and children, as the onely meane to free them from the desolation of this ruine; I may not dye the death of my fellow-citizens, let us borrow the vengeance of this hatefull life from vertue: And drawing a blade, he had hidden under his garments, therewith ran himselfe thorow, and falling on his face, died at the Consuls feet. *Alexander* besieged a Citie in *India*, the inhabitants whereof, perceiving themselves brought to a very narrow pinch, resolved obstinately to deprive him of the pleasure he might get of his victorie, and together with their Citie, in despite of his humanitie, set both the Towne and themselves on a light fire, and so were all consumed. A new kinde of warring, where the enemies did all they could, and sought to save them, they to loose themselves, and to be assured of their death, did all a man can possible effect to warrant his life. *Astapa*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

a Citie in *Spaine*, being very weake of wals, and other defences, to withstand the Romanes that besieged the same; the inhabitants drew all their riches, and wealth into the market-place, whereof having made a heap, and on the top of it placed their wives and children, and encompassed and covered the same with drie brush wood, that it might burne the easier, and having appointed fifty lusty young men of theirs for the performance of their resolution, made a sally, where following their determined vow, seeing they could not vanquish, suffered themselves to be slaine every mothers childe. The fifty, after they had massacred every living soule remaining in the Citie, and set fire to the heap, joyfully leaped there-into, ending their generous liberty in a state rather insensible, than dolorous and reprochfull; shewing their enemies, that if fortune had beene so pleased, they should aswell have had the courage to bereave them of the victory, as they had to yeeld it them both raine and hideous, yea, and mortall to those, who allured by the glittering of the gold, that moulten ran from out the flame, thicke and three-fold approaching greedily unto it, were therein smothered and burned, the formost being unable to give bake, by reason of the throng that followed them. The *Abideans* pressed by *Philip*, resolved upon the very same, but being prevented, the King whose heart yerned and abhorred to see the fond-rash precipitation of such an execution (having first seized-upon and saved the treasure, and moveables, which they had diversly condemned to the flames and utter spoyle) retiring all the Souldiers, granting them the full space of three dayes to make themselves away, that so they might doe it with more order and leasure; which three dayes they replenished with bloud and murder beyond all hostile cruelty: And which is strange, there was no one person saved, that had

CHAPT  
III

A custom  
the Ile of  
Cea

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

power upon himselfe. There are infinite examples of such-like popular conclusions, which seeme more violent, by how much more the effect of them is more universall. They are lesse than severall, what discourse would not doe in every one, it doth in all: The vehemence of societie, ravishing particular judgements. Such as were condemned to dye in the time of *Tiberius*, and delaid their execution any while, lost their goods, and could not be buried; but such as prevented the same, in killing themselves, were solemnly enterred, and might at their pleasure, bequeath such goods as they had to whom they list. But a man doth also sometimes desire death, in hope of a greater good. I desire (saith Saint *Paul*) to be out of this world, that I may be with *Jesus Christ*: and who shal release me out of these bonds? *Cleombrotus Ambraciota* having read *Platoes Phaeton*, was so possessed with a desire and longing for an after-life, that without other occasion or more adoe, he went and headlong cast himselfe into the sea. Whereby it appeareth how improperly we call this voluntarie dissolution, despaire; unto which the violence of hope doth often transport us, and as often a peacefull and settled inclination of judgement. *Jacques du Castell* Bishop of *Soissons*, in the voyage which Saint *Leves* undertooke beyond the Seas, seeing the King and all his Army ready to returne into *France*, and leave the affaires of Religion imperfect, resolved with himselfe rather to goe to heaven; And having bidden his friends farewell, in the open view of all men, rushed alone into the enemies troops of whom he was forthwith hewen in peeces. In a certaine kingdome of these late-discovered *Indies*, upon the day of a solemne procession, in which the Idols they adore, are publikely carried up and downe, upon a chariot of exceeding greatnesse: besides that, there are many seene to cut and slice great mammoicks of their quicke



## THE SECOND BOOKE

flesh, to offer the said Idols; there are numbers of others seene, who prostrating themselves alongst upon the ground, endure very patiently to be mouldred and crushed to death, under the Chariots wheelles, thinking thereby to purchase after their death, a veneration of holinesse, of which they are not defrauded. The death of this Bishop, armed as we have said, argueth more generositie, and lesse sence: the heat of the combat ammusung one part of it. Some common-wealths there are, that have gone about to sway the justice, and direct the opportunitie of voluntarie deaths. In our Citie of *Marseille*, they were wont in former ages, ever to keepe some poison in store, prepared and compounded with hemlocke, at the Cities charge, for such as would upon any occasion shorten their daies, having first approved the reasons of their enterprise unto the six hundred Elders of the Towne, which was their Senate: For, otherwise it was unlawfull for any body, except by the Magistrates permission, and for very lawfully-urgent occasions, to lay violent hands upon himselfe. The very same law was likewise used in other places. *Sextus Pompeius* going into *Asia*, passed thorow the Iland of *Cea*, belonging to *Negropont*; it fortuneth whilst he abode there, (as one reporteth that was in his companie) that a woman of great authority, having first yeelded an accompt unto her Citizens, and shewed good reasons why she was resolved to end her life, earnestly entreated *Pompey* to be an assistant at her death, that so it might be esteemed more honourable, which he assented unto; and having long time in vaine sought, by vertue of his eloquence (wherein he was exceeding ready) and force of perswasion, to alter her intent, and remove her from her purpose, in the end yeelded to her request. She had lived foure score and ten yeares in a most happy estate of minde and body, but then lying on her bed, better adorned than before

CHAPTER

III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### III

A custome of  
the Ile of  
Cea

she was accustomed to have it, and leaning on her elbow, thus she bespake: The Gods, Oh *Sextus Pompeius*, and rather those I forgoe, than those I goe unto, reward and appay thee, for that thou hast vouchsafed to be both a counsellor of my life, and a witnesse of my death. As for my part, having hitherto ever tasted the favourable visage of fortune, for feare the desire of living overlong should make me taste of her frownes, with an happy and successefull end, I will now depart, and licence the remainder of my soule, leaving behind me two daughters of mine, with a legion of grand-children and nephewes. That done, having preached unto, and exhorted all her people and kinsfolks to an unitie and peace, and divided her goods amongst them, and recommended her houshold Gods unto her eldest daughter, with an assuredly-staide hand she tooke the cup, wherein the poyson was, and having made her vowes unto *Mercurie*, and prayers, to conduct her unto some happy place in the other world, roundly swallowed that mortall potion; which done, she intertained the company with the progresse of her behaviour, and as the parts of her body were one after another possessed with the cold operation of that venom; untill such time as shee said, shee felt-it worke at the heart and in her entrals, shee called her daughter to doe her the last office, and close her eyes. *Plinie* reporteth of a certaine *Hiperborean* nation, wherein, by reason of the milde temperature of the aire, the inhabitants thereof, commonly never dye, but when they please to make themselves away, and that being weary and tired with living, they are accustomed at the end of a long-long age; having first made merry and good cheare with their friends, from the top of an high-steepy rocke, appointed for that purpose, to cast themselves head-long into the Sea. Grieving-smart, and a worse death seeme to me the most excusable incitations.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER

*To morrow is a new day*



DO with some reason, as me seemeth, give pricke and praise unto *Jaques Amiot* above all our French writers, not only for his natural purity, and pure elegancie of the tongue, wherein he excelleth all others, nor for his indefatigable constancie of so long and toyle-some a labour, nor for the unsearchable depth of his knowledge, having so successefully-happy been able to explaine an Author so close and thorny, and unfold a writer so mysterious and entangled (for, let any man tell me what he list; I have no skill of the Greeke, but I see thorowout al his translation a sense so closely-joynted, and so pithily-continued, that either he hath assuredly understood and inned the very imagination, and the true conceit of the Author, or having through a long and continuall [conversation], lively planted in his minde a generall Idea of that of *Plutarke*, he hath at least lent him nothing that doth belye him, or mis-seeme him) but above all, I kon him thanks that he hath had the hap to chuse, and knowledge to cull-out so worthy a worke, and a booke so fit to the purpose, therewith to make so unvaluable a present unto his Countrie. We that are in the number of the ignorant had beene utterly confounded, had not his booke raised us from out the dust of ignorance: God-a-mercy his endeavours we dare [now] both speake and write: Even Ladies are therewith able to confront Masters of arts: It is our breviarie. If so good a man chance to live, I bequeath *Xenophon* unto him, to doe as much. It is an easier peece of worke, and so much the more

CHAPTER  
IV

*To morrow  
is a new day*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

IV

To morrow  
is a new day

agreeing with his age. Moreover, I wot not how me seemeth, although he roundly and clearly disintangle himselfe from hard passages, that notwithstanding his stile is more close and neerer it selfe, when it is not laboured and wrested, and that it glideth smoothly at his pleasure. I was even now reading of that place, where *Plutarke* speaketh of himselfe, that *Rusticus* being present at a declamation of his in Rome, received a packet from the Emperour, which he temporized to open untill he had made an end: wherein (saith he) all the assistants did singularly commend the gravitie of the man. Verily, being on the instance of curiositie, and on the greedy and insatiate passion of newes, which with such indiscreet impatience, and impatient indiscretion, induceth us to neglect all things, for to entertaine a new-come guest, and forget all respect and countenance, whersoever we be, suddenly to break up such letters as are brought us; he had reason to commend the gravitie of *Rusticus*: to which he might also have added the commendation of his civilitie and curtesie, for that he would not interrupt the course of his declamation; But I make a question, whether he might be commended for his wisdom: for, receiving unexpected letters, and especially from an Emperour, it might very well have fortun'd, that his deferring to read them, might have caused some notable inconvenience. *Recklesnes* is the vice contrarie unto curiositie; towards which I am naturally enclined, and wherein I have seen many men so extremely plunged, that three or foure dayes after the receiving of letters, which hath beene sent them, they have beene found in their pockets yet unopened. I never opened any, not only of such as had beene committed to my keeping, but of such as by any fortune came to my hands. And I make a conscience, standing neare some great

## THE SECOND BOOKE

person, if mine eyes chance, at unwares, to steale some knowledge of any letters of importance that he readeth. Never was man lesse inquisitive, or pryed lesse into other mens affaires, than I. In our fathers time: the Lord of *Boutieres* was like to have lost *Turcin*, forsomuch as being one night at supper in very good company, he deferred the reading of an advertisement, which was delivered him of the treasons that were practised and complotted against that Citie, where he commanded. And *Plutarke* himselfe hath taught me, that *Julius Cesar* had escaped death, if going to the Senate-house, that day wherein he was murthered by the conspirators, he had read a memorial which was presented unto him. Who likewise reporteth the case of *Archias*, the Tyrant of *Thebes*, how the night fore-going the execution of the enterprize that *Pelopidas* had complotted to kill him, thereby to set his Countrie at libertie: another *Archias* of *Athens* wrote him a letter, wherein he particularly related unto him all that was conspired and complotted against him: which letter being delivered him while he sate at supper, he deferred the opening of it, pronouncing this by-word: *To morrow is a new day*, which afterward was turned to a Proverb. *Geometer*. A wise man may, in mine opinion, for the interest of others, as not unmannerly to breake his dinner, like unto *Rusticks*, or not to discontinue any other affaire of importance, remitt and deter to morrow, and such newes as are brought him: but for his owne private interest, or particular pleasure, he ought to be a man having publike charge, if he hath his dinner so much, that he will not break it off for his sleepe, that he will not interrupt it: to do otherwise is inexexcusable. And in former ages was the dining-place in *Rome*, which they named the *Curia*, so honourable at the table, because it was more

CHAPTER  
IV

To morrow  
is a new day

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER

### IV

To morrow  
is a new day

free and more accessible for such as might casually come in, to entertaine him that should be there placed. Witnesse, that though they were sitting at the board, they neither omitted nor gave over the managing of other affaires, and following of other accidents. But when all is said, it is very hard, chiefly in humane actions, to prescribe so exact rules by discourse of reason, that fortune doe not sway, and keepe her right in them.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### *Of Conscience*



MY brother the Lord of *Brouze* and my selfe, during the time of our civill warres, travelling one day together, we fortun'd to meet upon the way with a Gentleman, in outward semblance, of good demeanour: He was of our contrarie faction, but forasmuch as he counterfeited himselfe otherwise; I knew it not. And the worst of these tumultuous intestine broyles, is, that the cards are so shuffled (your enemy being neither by language nor by fashion, nor by any other apparent marke distinguished from you; nay, which is more, brought up under the same lawes and customes, and breathing the same ayre) that it is a very hard matter to avoid confusion and shun disorder. Which consideration, made me not a little fearefull to meet with our troopes, especially where I was not knowne, lest I should be urged to tell my name, and haply doe worse. As other times before it had befallne me; for, by such a chance, or rather mistaking, I fortun'd once to lose all my men and horses, and hardly escaped my selfe: and amongst other my losses, and servants that were

## THE SECOND BOOKE

mine, the thing that most grieved me, was the CHAPTER  
 untimely and miserable death of a young Italian V  
 Gentleman, whom I kept as my Page, and very Of  
 carefully brought up, with whom dyed, as forward, Conscience  
 as budding and as hopefull a youth as ever I saw.  
 But this man seemed so fearfully-dismaid, and at  
 every encounter of horsemen, and passage, by, or  
 throw any Towne that held for the King, I ob-  
 served him to be so strangely distracted, that in the  
 end I perceived, and ghesed they were but guilty  
 alarms that his conscience gave him. It seemed  
 unto this seely man, that all might apparently, both  
 through his blushing selfe-accusing countenance, and  
 by the crosses he wore upon his upper garments,  
 read the secret intentions of his faint heart. Of  
 such marvailous-working power is the sting of con-  
 science: which often induceth us to bewray, to  
 accuse, and to combat our selves; and for want of  
 other evidences shee produceth our selves against  
 our selves.

*Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum.*

—JUVEN. *Sat.* xlii. 195.

Their minde, the tormentor of sinne,  
 Shaking an unscene whip within.

The storie of *Bessus* the Pœnian is so common,  
 that even children have it in their mouths, who being  
 found fault withall, that in mirth he had beaten  
 downe a nest of young Sparrowes, and then killed  
 them. answered, he had great reason to doe it; forso-  
 much as those young birds ceased not falsly to accuse  
 him to have murdered his father, which parricide  
 was never suspected to have beene committed by  
 him: and untill that day had layen secret; but the  
 revengefull furies of the conscience, made the same  
 partie to reveale it, that by all right was to doe  
 penance for so hatefull and unnaturall a murder.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
V  
Of  
Conscience

*Hesiodus* correcteth the saying of *Plato*, That punishment doth commonly succeed the guilt, and follo sinne at hand: for, he affirmeth, that it rather borne at the instant, and together with sinne it self and they are as twinnes borne at one birth togethe *Whosoever expects punishment, suffereth the same, an whosoever deserveth it, he doth expect it. Impietie do invent, and iniquitie doth frame torments against selfe.*

*Malum consilium consultori pessimum.*

—ERAS. *Chil.* i. cent. ii. ad. 14.

Bad counsell is worst for the counsellor that gives the counsell

Even as the Waspe stingeth and offendeth other but her selfe much more; for, in hurting others, sh loseth her force and sting for ever.

—*itasque in ulnere ponunt.*

—VIRG. *Georg.* iv. 238.

They, while they others sting,  
Death to themselves doe bring.

The *Cantharides* have some part in them, whic by a contrarietie of nature serveth as an antidot ( counterpoison against their poison: so likewise, if one taketh pleasure in vice, there is a certair contrarie displeasure engendred in the conscienc which by sundry irksome and painful imagination perplexeth and tormenteth us, both waking an asleepe.

*Quippe ubi se multi per somnia sæpe loquentes,  
Aut morbo delirantes procræze ferantur,  
Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse.*—LUCR. v. 1168.

Many in dreames oft speaking, or unhealed,  
In sicknesse raving have themselves revealed,  
And brought to light their sinnes long time concealed.

*Apollodorus* dreamed he saw himselfe first flea by the Scythians, and then boyled in a pot, and th

## THE SECOND BOOKE

his owne heart murmured, saying; I only have caused this mischief to light upon thee. *Epicurus* was wont to say, that no lurking hole can shroud the wicked; for, they can never assure themselves to be sufficiently hidden, sithence conscience is ever ready to disclose them to themselves.

CHAPTER  
V  
—  
Of  
Conscience

—*prima est hæc ultio, quid se  
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur.*—JUVEN. Sat. xiii. 2.

This is the first revenge, no guilty mind  
Is quitted, though it selfe be judge assign'd.

Which as it doth fill us with feare and doubt, so  
doth it store us with assurance and trust. And I  
may boldly say, that I have waded thorow many  
dangerous hazards, with a more untired pace, only in  
consideration of the secret knowledge I had of mine  
owne will, and innocence of my desseignes.

*Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, illa concipit intra  
Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo.*  
—OVID, *Fast.* l. 485.

As each mans minde is guiltie, so doth he  
Inlie breed hope and feare, as his deeds be.

Of examples, there are thousands: It shall suffice  
us to alleage three only, and all of one man. *Scipio*  
being one day accused before the Roman people, of  
an urgent and capitall accusation; in stead of excus-  
ing himselfe, or flattering the Judges; turning to  
them, he said. It will well besee me you to under-  
take to judge of his head, by whose meanes you have  
authoritie to judge of all the world. The same man,  
another time, being vehemently urged by a *Tribune*  
of the people, who charged him with sundry imputa-  
tions, in lieu of pleading or excusing his cause, gave  
him this sudden and short answer. Let us goc (quoth  
he, my good Citizens; let us forthwith goe (I say) to  
give hartie thanks unto the Gods for the victorie,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### V

### Of Conscience

which even upon such a day as this is, they gave me against the Carthaginians. And therewith advancing himselfe to march before the people, all the assembly, and even his accuser himselfe did undelayedly follow him towards the Temple. After that, *Petilius* having beene animated and stirred up by *Cato* to sollicite and demand a strict accompt of him, of the money he had managed, and which was committed to his trust, whilst he was in the Province of *Antioch*; *Scipio* being come into the Senate-house, of purpose to answer for himselfe, pulling out the booke of his accompts from under his gowne, told them all, that that booke contained truly, both the receipt and laying out thereof; and being required to deliver the same unto a Clarke to register it, he refused to doe it, saying he would not doe himselfe that wrong or indignitie; and thereupon with his owne hands, in presence of all the Senate, tore the booke in peeces. I cannot apprehend or beleieve, that a guiltie-cauterized conscience could possibly dissemble or counterfet such an undismayed assurance: His heart was naturally too great, and enured to overhigh fortune (saith *Titus Livius*) to know how to be a criminall offender, and stoopingly to yeeld himselfe to the basenesse, to defend his innocencie. Torture and racking are dangerous inventions, and seeme rather to be trials of patience than Essayes of truth. And both he that can, and he that cannot endure them, conceale the truth. For wherefore shall paine or smart, rather compell me to confesse that, which is so indeed, than force me to tell that which is not? And contrariwise, if he who hath not done that whereof he is accused, is sufficiently patient to endure those torments; why shall not he be able to tolerate them, who hath done it, and is guilty indeed; so deare and worthy a reward as life being proposed unto him? I am of opinion, that the ground of his

## THE SECOND BOOKE

invention, proceedeth from the consideration of the power and facultie of the conscience. For, to the guilty, it seemeth to give a kinde of furtherance to the torture, to make him confesse his fault, and weakneth and dismayeth him: and on the other part, it encourageth and strengthneth the innocent against torture. To say truth, it is a meane full of uncertainty and danger. What would not a man say; nay, what not doe, to avoid so grievous paines, and shun such torments?

CHAPTER  
V  
Of  
Conscience

*Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor.*—SEN. Prover.

Torment to lye sometimes will drive,  
Ev'n the most innocent alive.

Whence it followeth, that he whom the Judge hath tortured, because he shall not dye an innocent, he shall bring him to his death, both innocent and tortured. Many thousands have thereby charged their heads with false confessions. Amongst which I may well place *Phylotas*, considering the circumstances of the endictment that *Alexander* framed against him, and the progresse of his torture. But so it is, that (as men say) it is the least evill humane weaknesse could invent: though, in my conceit, very inhumanely, and therewithall most unprofitably. Many Nations lesse barbarous in that, than the Græcian, or the Romane, who terme them so, judge it a horrible and cruell thing, to racke and torment a man for a fault whereof you are yet in doubt. Is your ignorance long of him? What can he doe withall? Are not you unjust, who because you will not put him to death without some cause, you doe worse than kill him? And that it is so, consider but how often he rather chuseth to dye guiltlesse, than passe by this information, much more painfull, than the punishment or torment; and who many times, by reason of the sharpnesse of it, preventeth,



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER V

#### Of Conscience

furthereth, yea, and executeth the punishment. I wot not whence I heard this story, but it exactly hath reference unto the conscience of our Justice. A countrie woman accused a souldier before his Generall, being a most severe Justicer, that he, with violence, had snatched from out her poore childrens hands, the small remainder of some pap or water-gruell, which shee had onely left to sustaine them, forsomuch as the Army had ravaged and wasted all. The poore woman had neither witnesse nor prooffe of it; It was but her yea, and his no; which the Generall perceiving, after he had summoned her to be well advised what shee spake, and that shee should not accuse him wrongfully; for, if shee spake an untruth, shee should then be culpable of his accusation: But shee constantly persisting to charge him, he forthwith, to discover the truth, and to be thoroughly resolved, caused the accused Souldiers belly to be ripped, who was found faulty, and the poore woman to have said true; whereupon shee was discharged. A condemnation instructive to others.

### THE SIXTH CHAPTER

#### *Of Exercise or Practice*



It is a hard matter (although our conceit doe willingly apply it selfe unto it) that Discourse and Instruction, should sufficiently be powerful, to direct us to action, and addresse us to performance, if over and besides that, we doe not by experience exercise and frame our minde, to the traine whereunto we will range it: otherwise, when we shall be on the point of the effects, it will doubtlesse finde it selfe much en-

## THE SECOND BOOKE

gaged and empeached. And that is the reason why amongst Philosophers, those that have willed to attaine to some greater excellence, have not beene content, at home, and at rest to expect the rigors of fortune, for feare she should surprise them un-experienced and finde them novices, if she should chance to enter fight with them; but have rather gone to meet and front her before, and witting-earnestly cast themselves to the triall of the hardest difficulties. Some have thereby voluntarily forsaken great riches, onely to practise a voluntarie povertie: others have willingly found out labour, and an austeritie of a toylesome life, thereby to harden and enure themselves to evill, and travell: othersome have frankly deprived themselves of the dearest and best parts of their body, as of their eyes, and members of generation, lest their over-pleasing, and too-too wanton service, might in any sort mollifie and distract the constant resolution of their minde. But to dye, which is the greatest worke we have to doe, exercise can nothing availle us thereunto. A man may, by custome and experience, fortifie himselfe against griefe, sorrow, shame, want, and such like accidents: But concerning death, we can but once feelee and trie the same. We are all novices, and new to learne when we come unto it. There have, in former times, beene found men so good husbands and thrifty of time, that even in death they have assayed to taste and [savour] it; and bent their minde to observe and see, what manner of thing that passage of death was; but none did ever yet come backe againe to tell us tidings of it.

CHAPTER  
VI  
Of Exercise  
or Practice

—*nemo expergitus extat*  
*Frigida quem semel est vitai pausa secunda.*  
—Lucr. iii. 978.

No man doth ever-after wake,  
Whom once his lifes cold rest doth take.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
VI  
Of Exercise  
or Practice

*Caninus Julius*, a noble Romane, a man of singular vertue and constancie, having beene condemned to death by that lewdly-mischievous monster of men, *Caligula*: besides many marvellous evident assurances he gave of his matchlesse resolution, when he was even in the nicke to endure the last stroke of the executioner; a Philosopher, being his friend, interrupted him with this question, saying: *Caninus*, in what state is your soule now; what doth she; what thoughts possesse you now? I thought (answered he) to keepe me ready and prepared with all my force, to see whether in this instant of death, so short and so neere at hand, I might perceive some dislodging or distraction of the soule, and whether it will shew some feeling of her sudden departure; that (if I apprehend or learne any thing of her) I may afterward, if I can, returne, and give advertisement thereof unto my friends. Loe-here a Philosopher, not only untill death, but even in death it selfe: what assurance was it, and what fiercenes of courage, to will that his owne death should serve him as a lesson, and have leasure to thinke else where in a matter of such consequence;

—*jus hoc animi morientis habebat.*

—LUCAN. viii. 636.

This power of minde had he,  
When it from him did flee.

Me seemeth neverthelesse, that in some sort there is a meane to familiarize our selves with it, and to assay it. We may have some experience of it, if not whole and perfect, at least such as may not altogether be unprofitable, and which may yeelde us better fortified and more assured. If we cannot attaine unto it, we may at least approach it, and discern the same: And if we cannot enter her fort, yet shal we see and frequent the approaches unto

## THE SECOND BOOKE

it. It is not without reason we are taught to take notice of our sleepe, for the resemblance it hath with death. How easily we passe from waking to sleeping; with how little interest we lose the knowledge of light, and of our selves. The facultie of sleepe might haply seeme unprofitable, and against nature, sithence it depriveth us of all actions, and barreth us of all sense, were it not that nature doth thereby instruct us, that she hath equally made us, as well to live, as to die; and by life presenteth the eternal state unto us, which she after the same reserveth for us, so as to accustome us thereunto, and remove the feare of it from us. But such as by some violent accident are falne into a faintnes of heart, and have lost all senses, they, in mine opinion, have well-nigh beene, where they might behold her true and naturall visage: For, touching the instant or moment of the passage, it is not to be feared, it should bring any travell or displeasure with it, forasmuch as we can have, nor sense, nor feeling without leasure. Our sufferances have need of time, which is so short, and plunged in death, that necessarily it must be insensible. It is the approaches that lead unto it we should feare; and those may fall within the compasse of mans experience. Many things seeme greater by imagination, than by effect. I have passed over a good part of my age in sound and perfect health. I say, not only sound, but blithe and wantonly-lustfull. That state full of lust, of prime and mirth, made me deeme the consideration of sicknesses so yrkesome and horrible, that when I came to the experience of them, I have found their fits but weake, and their assaults but faint, in respect of my apprehended feare. Lo here what I daily prove. Let me be under a rooffe, in a good chamber, warme-clad, and well at ease in some tempestuous and stormy night. I am exceedingly

CHAPTER  
VI

Of Exercise  
or Practice



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VI

#### Of Exercise or Practice

perplexed, and much grieved for such as are abroad, and have no shelter: But let me be in the storme my selfe, I doe not so much as desire to be elsewhere. Only to be continually pent up in a chamber, seemed intolerable to me. I have now enured my selfe to live a whole weeke, yea a moneth in my chamber full of care, trouble, alteration and weaknesse; and have found, that in the time of my best health I moaned such as were sicke, much more than I can well moane my selfe when I am ill at ease: and that the power of my apprehension did well-nigh halfe endear the essence and truth of the thing it selfe. I am in good hope the like will happen to me of death: and that it is not worth the labour I take for so many preparations as I prepare against her; and so many helpes as I call to sustaine, and assemble to endure the shocke and violence of it. But hab or nab we can never take too much advantage of it. During our second or third troubles (I doe not well remember which) I fortun'd one day, for recreation sake, to goe forth and take the ayre, about a league from my house, who am seated even in the bowels of all troubles of our civill warres of *France*, supposing to be most safe, so neere mine owne home and [r]etreite, that I had no need of better attendance or equipage. I was mounted upon a very easie-going nag, but not very sure. At my returning home againe, a sudden occasion being offered me, to make use of this nag in a peece of service, whereto he was neither trained nor accustomed, one of my men (a strong sturdy fellow) mounted upon a young strong-headed horse, and that had a desperate hard mouth, fresh, lusty and in breath; to shew his courage, and to out-goe his fellowes, fortun'd with might and maine to set spurres unto him, and giving him the bridle, to come right into the path where I

## THE SECOND BOOKE

was, and as a *Colossus* with his weight riding over me and my nag, that were both very little, he overthrew us both, and made us fall with our heeles upward: so that the nag lay along astonied in one place, and I in a trance groveling on the ground ten or twelke paces wide of him; my face all torne and brused, my sword which I had in my hand a good way from me, my girdle broken, with no more motion or sense in me than a stocke. It is the only swowning that ever I felt yet. Those that were with me, after they had assayed all possible meanes to bring me to my selfe againe, supposing me dead, tooke me in their armes, and with much adoe were carying me home to my house, which was about halfe a french league thence: upon the way, and after I had for two houres space, by all, beene supposed dead and past all recoverie, I began to stir and breathe: for, so great aboundance of blood was false into my stomake, that to discharge it, nature was forced to rowze up her spirits. I was immediately set upon my feet, and bending forward, I presently cast up, in quantitie as much clottie pure blood, as a bucket will hold, and by the way was constrained to doe the like divers times before I could get home, whereby I began to recover a little life, but it was by little and little, and so long adoe, that my chiefe senses were much more enclining to death than to life.

CHAPTER  
VI  
Of Exercises  
or Practices

*Perche dubbiosa ancor del suo ritorno  
Non s'assicura attonita la mente.*

For yet the minde doubtfull it's returne  
Is not assured, but astonished.

The remembrance whereof (which yet I beare deeply imprinted in my minde) representing me her visage and *Idea* so lively and so naturally, doth in some sort reconcile me unto her. And when I began

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER VI  
Of Exercise  
or Practice

to see, it was with so dim, so weake and so troubled a sight, that I could not discerne anything of the light.

—*come quel c'hor' apre, hor chiude*  
*Gli occhii, mezzo tral sonno el esser desto.*

As he that sometimes opens, sometimes shuts  
His eyes, betweene sleepe and awake.

Touching the function of the soule, they started up and came in the same progresse as those of the body. I perceived my selfe all bloudy; for my doublet was all sullied with the bloud I had cast. The first conceit I apprehended, was, that I had received some shot in my head; and in truth, at the same instant, there were divers that shot round about us. Me thought, my selfe had no other hold of me, but of my lips-ends. I closed mine eyes, to helpe (as me seemed) to send it forth, and tooke a kinde of pleasure to linger and languishingly to let my selfe goe from my selfe. It was an imagination swimming superficially in my minde, as weake and as tender as all the rest: but in truth, not only exempted from displeasure, but rather commixt with that pleasant sweetnesse, which they feele that suffer themselves to fall into a soft-slumbring and sense-entrancing sleepe. I beleewe it is the same state, they find themselves in, whom in the agony of death we see to droop and faint thorow weaknesse: and am of opinion, we plaine and moane them without cause, esteeming that either they are agitated with grievous pangs, or that their soule is pressed with painfull cogitations. It was ever my conceit, against the opinion of many, yea and against that of *Stephanus la Boetie*, that those whom we see, so overwhelmed, and faintly-drooping at the approches of their end, or utterly cast downe with the lingring tediousnesse of their diseases, or by accident of some apoplexie, or



## THE SECOND BOOKE

—(vi morbi sæpe coactus  
Ante oculos aliquis nostros ut fulminis ictu,  
Concidit, et spumas agit, ingemit, et fremit artus,  
Desipit, extantat nervos, torquetur, anhelat,  
Inconstanter et in jactando membra fatigat.)

—Lect. iii. 490.

### CHAPTER VI

Of Exercise  
or Practice

(Some man by force of sicknesse driv'n doth fall,  
As if by thunder stroke, before our eyes;  
He fomes, he grones, he trembles over all,  
He raves, he stretches, he's vex't, panting lyes,  
He tyr's his limmes by tossing,  
Now this now that way crossing.)

falling-evill, or hurt in the head, whom we heare  
throb and rattle, and send forth grones and gaspes,  
although we gather some tokens from them, whereby  
it seemeth, they have yet some knowledge left and  
certaine motions we see them make with ther body:  
I say, I have ever thought, they had their soule and  
body buried and asleepe.

*Vivat et est vitæ nescius ipse suæ.*

—OVID, *Trist.* i. *El.* iii. 12.

He lives yet knowes not he,  
That he alive should be.

And I could not beleieve, that at so great an  
astonishment of members, and deffailance of senses,  
the soule could maintaine any force within, to know  
herselfe; and therefore had no manner of discourse  
tormenting them, which might make them judge and  
feele the misery of their condition, and that conse-  
quently they were not greatly to be moaned. As for  
my selfe, I imagine no state so intolerable nor con-  
dition so horrible, as to have a feelingly-afflicted  
soule, void of meanes to disburthen and declare her  
selfe: As I would say of those we send to execution,  
having first caused their tongue to be cut out, were it  
not that in this manner of death, the most dumbe  
seemes unto me the fittest, namely, if it be accom-



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
VI  
Of Exercise  
or Practice

panied with a resolute and grave countenance. And as those miserable prisoners which light in the hands of those hard-harted and villenous Souldiers of these times. of whom they are tormented with all maner of cruell entreatie, by compulsion to drawe them unto some excessive and impossible ransome, keeping them al that while in so hard a condition and place, that they have no way left them to utter their thoughts and expresse their miserie. The Poets have fained, there were some Gods, that favoured the release of such as sufferd so languishing deaths.

—*hunc ego Diti*

*Sacrum jussa fero, teque isto corpore solvo.*

—*VIRG. ÆN. iv. 703, Iria.*

This to death sacred, I, as was my charge,  
Doe beare, and from this body thee enlarge.

And the faltering speeches and uncertaine answers, that by continuall ringing in their eares and incessant urging them, are somtimes by force wrested from them or by the motions which seeme to have some sympathy with that whereof they are examined, is notwithstanding no witnes that they live at least a perfect sound life. We do also in yawning, before sleep fully seize upon us, apprehend as it were in a slumber, what is done about us, and with a troubled and uncertaine hearing, follow the voyces, which seeme to sound but on the outward limits of our soule: and frame answers according to the last words we heard, which taste more of chance than of sense: which thing now I have proved by experience. I make no doubt, but hitherto, I have well judged of it. For, first lying as in a trance, I laboured even with my nailes to open my doublet (for I was unarmed) and well I wot, that in my imagination I felt nothing did hurt me. For, there are severall motions in us, which proceed not of our free wil.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant.*

—x. 396.

The halfe-dead fingers stirre, and feele,  
(Though it they cannot stirre) for steele.

### CHAPTER VI

Of Exercise  
or Practice

Those that fall, doe commonly by a naturall impulsion cast their armes abroad before their falling, which sheweth, that our members have certaine offices, which they lend one to another, and possesse certaine agitations, apart from our discourse :

*Falciferos memorant currus abscindere membra,  
Ut tremere in terra videatur ab artubus, id quod  
Decidit abscisum, cum mens tamen atque hominis vis  
Mobilitate mali non quit sentire dolorem.*—LUCR. iii. 648.

They say, sith-bearing chariots limbes bereave,  
So as on earth, that which cut-off they leave,  
Doth seeme to quake ; when yet mans force and minde  
Doth not the paine, through so quicke motion, finde.

My stomacke was surcharged with clotted bloud, my hands of themselves were still running to it, as often they are wont (yea against the knowledge of our will) where we feele it to itch. There are many creatures, yea and some men, in whom after they are dead, we may see their muskles to close and stirre. All men know by experience, there be some parts of our bodies, which often without any consent of ours doe stirre, stand and lye downe againe. Now these passions, which but exteriorly touch us, cannot properly be termed ours : For, to make them ours, a man must wholly be engaged unto them : And the paines that our feet or hands feele whilst we sleepe, are not ours. When I came neere my house, where the tidings of my fall was already come, and those of my houshold met me, with such outeries as are used in like times, I did not only answer some words, to what I was demanded, but some tell me,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VI

Of Exercise  
or Practice

I had the memory to command my men to give my wife a horse, whom I perceived to be over-tired, and labouring in the way, which is very hilly, foule, and rugged. It seemeth this consideration proceeded from a vigilant soule: yet was I cleane distracted from it, they were but vaine conceits, and as in a cloud, only moved by the sense of the eyes and eares: They came not from my selfe. All which notwithstanding, I knew neither whence I came, nor whither I went, nor could I understand or consider what was spoken unto me. They were but light effects, that my senses produced of themselves, as it were of custome. Whatsoever the soule did assist it with, was but a dreame, being lightly touched, and only sprinkled by the soft impression of the senses. In the meane time my state was verily most pleasant and easefull. I felt no manner of care or affliction, neither for my selfe nor others. It was a slumbering, languishing and extreme weaknesse, without any paine at all. I saw mine owne house and knew it not; when I was laid in my bed, I felt great ease in my rest, Fore I had beene vilely hurried and haled by those poore men, which had taken the paines to carry me upon their armes a long and wearysome way, and to say truth, they had all beene wearied twice or thrice over, and were faine to shift severall times. Many remedies were presently offered me, but I tooke none, supposing verily I had beene deadly hurt in the head. To say truth, it had beene a very happy death: For, the weaknesse of my discourse hinderd me from judging of it, and the feeblenesse of my body from feeling the same. Me thought I was yeelding up the ghost so gently, and after so easie and indolent a manner, that I feele no other action lesse burthensome than that was. But when I began to come to life againe and recover my former strength,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Ut tandem sensus convalescere mei,*

—OVID, *Trist.* l. *El.* iii. 14.

At last when all the sprites I beare,  
Recall'd and recollected were,

### CHAPTER VI

Of Exercise  
or Practice

which was within two or three houres after, I presently felt my selfe full of aches and paines all my body over; for, each part thereof was with the violence of the fall much brused and tainted; and for two or three nights after I found my self so ill, that I verily supposed I shold have had another fit of death: But that a more lively, and sensible one: (and to speak plaine) I feele my bruises yet, and feare me shall do while I live: I will not forget to tell you, that the last thing I could rightly fall into againe, was the remembrance of this accident, and I made my men many times to repeat me over and over againe, whither I was going, whence I came, and at what houre that chance befell me, before I could thoroughly conceive it. Concerning the manner of my falling, they in favour of him who had beene the cause of it, concealed the truth from me, and told me other flim flam tales. But a while after, and the morrow next when my memorie began to come to it selfe againe, and represent the state unto me, wherein I was at the instant, when I perceived the horse riding over me (for being at my heeles, I chanced to espy him, and helde my selfe for dead; yet was the conceit so sudden, that feare had no leasure to enter my thoughts) me seemed it was a flashing or lightning, that smote my soule with shaking, and that I came from another world. This discourse of so slight an accident, is but vaine and frivolous, were not the instructions I have drawne from thence for my use: For truly, for a man to acquaint himselfe with death, I finde no better way than to approach unto it. Now as *Plinie* saith, every man is a good discipline unto himselfe, alwayes provided he be able to prie into



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

AFTER  
VI  
—  
Exercise  
Practice

himselfe. This is not my doctrine, it is but my study; And not another mans lesson, but mine owne; Yet ought no man to blame me if I impart the same. What serves my turne, may haply serve another mans; otherwise I marre nothing; what I make use of, is mine owne; And if I play the foole, it is at mine owne cost, and without any other bodies interest. For it is but a kind of folly, that dyes in me, and hath no traine. We have notice but of two or three former ancients, that have trodden this path; yet can we not say, whether altogether like unto this of mine, for we know but their names. No man since hath followed their steps: it is a thorny and crabbed enterprise, and more than it makes shew of, to follow so strange and vagabond a path, as that of our spirit: to penetrate the shady, and enter the thicke-covered depths of these internall winding crunkes; To chuse so many, and settle so severall aires of his agitations: And tis a new extraordinary amusing, that distracts us from the common occupation of the world, yea and from the most recommended: Many yeares are past since I have no other mine, whereto my thoughts bend, but my selfe, and that I controule and study nothing but my selfe. And if I study any thing else, it is immediately to place it upon, or to say better, in my selfe. And me thinks I erre not, as commonly men doe in other sciences, without all comparison lesse profitable. I impart what I have learn't by this, although I greatly content not my selfe with the progresse I have made therein. *There is no description so hard, nor so profitable, as is the description of a mans owne life;* Yet must a man handsomely trimme-up, yea and dispose and range himselfe to appeare on the Theatre of this world. Now I continually tricke up my selfe; for I uncessantly describe my selfe. Custome hath made a mans speech of himselfe vicious. And

## THE SECOND BOOKE

obstinately forbids it in hatred of boasting, which ever seemeth closely to follow ones selfe witnesses, whereas a man should wipe a childes nose, that is now called to un-nose himselfe.

CHAPTER  
VI  
Of Exercise  
or Practice

*In vicium ducit culpa fuga.*—Hon. Art. Poet. 31.

Some shunning of some sinne,  
Doe draw some further in.

I finde more evill than good by this remedy: But suppose it were true, that for a man to entertaine the company with talking of himselfe, were necessarily presumption: I ought not following my generall intent, to refuse an action that publisheth this crazed quality, since I have it in my selfe: and I should not conceale this fault, which I have not only in use, but in profession. Neverthelesse to speake my opinion of it, this custome to condemne wine is much to blame, because many are therewith made drunke. Only good things may be abused. And I beleeeve this rule hath only regard to popular defects: They are snaffles wherewith neither Saints, nor Philosophers, nor Divines, whom we heare so gloriously to speake of themselves, will in any sort be bridled. No more doe I, though I be no more the one than other. If they write purposely or directly of it, yet when occasion doth conveniently leade them unto it, faine they not, headlong to cast themselves into the lists? Whereof doth *Socrates* treat more at large, than of himselfe? To what doth he more often direct his Disciples discourses, than to speake of themselves, not for their bookes lesson, but of the essence and moving of their soule? We religiously shrive our selves to God and our Confessor, as our neighbours to all the people. But will some answer me, we report but accusation; wee then report all: For, even our vertue it selfe is faulty and repentable; My art and profession, is to live. Who forbids me to

## THE SECOND BOOKE

weene, and please himselfe exceedingly with what he is, and fall into indiscreet love with himselfe, is in my conceit, the substance of this vice. The best remedy to cure him, is to doe cleane contrary to that which those appoint, who in forbidding men to speake of themselves, doe consequently also inhibit more to thinke of themselves. *Pride consisteth in conceit*: The tongue can have no great share in it. For one to amuse on himselfe, is in their imagination to please himselfe: And for a man to frequent and practise himselfe, is at an over-deare rate to please himselfe. But this excesse doth only breed in them, that but superficially feele and search themselves, that are seene to follow their affaires, which call idlenesse and fondnesse, for a man to entertaine, to applaud and to endeare himselfe, and frame Chimeraes, or build Castles in the ayre; deeming themselves as a third person and strangers to themselves. If any be besotted with his owne knowledge, looking upon himselfe, let him cast his eyes towards former ages, his pride shall be abated, his ambition shall be quailed; for there shall he finde many thousands of spirits, that will cleane suppress and tread him under. If he fortune to enter into any selfe-presumption of his owne worth, let him but call to remembrance the lives of *Scipio* and *Epaminondas*; so many armies, and so many Nations, which leave him so far behind them. No particular quality shall make him proud, that therewith shall reckon so many imperfect and weake qualities that are in him, and at last the nullity of humane condition. Forsomuch as *Socrates* had truly only nibbled on the precept of his God, to know himselfe, and by that study had learned to contemne himselfe, he alone was esteemed worthy of the name of Wise. Whosoever shall so know himselfe, let him boldly make himselfe knowne by his owne mouth.

CHAPTER  
VI  
Of Exercise  
or Practice

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

*Of the recompences or rewards of Honour*

### CHAPTER VII

Of the re-  
compences or  
rewards of  
Honour



HOSE which write the life of *Augustus Caesar*, note this in his military discipline, that he was exceeding liberall and lavish in his gifts to such as were of any desert; but as sparing and strait-handed in meere recompences of honour. Yet is it that himselfe had beene liberally gratified by his Unkle with militarie rewards, before ever he went to warres. It hath beene a witty invention, and received in most parts of the worlds Common-wealths, to establish and ordaine certaine vaine and worthles markes, therewith to honor and recompence vertue: As are the wreathes of Lawrell, the Chaplets of Oake, and the Garlands of Myrtle, the forme of a certaine peculiar garment; the privilege to ride in Coach thorow the City; or by night to have a Torch carried before one: Some particular place to sit-in in common assemblies; the prerogatives of certaine surnames and titles, and proper additions in armes, and such like things; the use whereof hath beene diversly received according to the opinions of Nations, which continueth to this day. We have for our part, together with divers of our neighbour-Nation, the orders of Knight-hood, which only were established to this purpose. Verily it is a most laudable use, and profitable custome, to finde meanes to reward the worth, and acknowledge the valour of rare and excellent men, to satisfie and content them with such payments, as in no sort charge the commonwealth, and put the Prince to no cost at all. And that which was ever knowne by ancient experience, and at other



## THE SECOND BOOKE

times we have plainly perceived amongst our selves, that men of qualitie, were ever more jealous of such recompences, than of others, wherein was both gaine and profit: which was not without reason and great apparence. If to the prize, which ought simply to be of honour, there be other commodities and riches joyned, this kinde of commixing, in stead of encreasing the estimation thereof, doth empaire, dissipate, and abridge it. The order of the Knights of Saint *Michael* in *France*, which of so long continuance hath beene in credit amongst us, had no greater commoditie than that it had no manner of communication with any other advantage or profit, which hath heretofore beene the cause, that there was no charge or state of what quality soever, whereto the nobilitie pretended with so much desire, or aspired with more affection, as it did to obtaine that order; nor calling, that was followed with more respect or greatnesse. Vertue embracing with more ambition, and more willingly aspiring after a recompence, that is meerly and simply her owne, and which is rather glorious, than profitable. For, to say truth, other gifts have no use so worthy; inasmuch, as they are employed to all manner of occasions. With riches a man doth reward the service of a groome, the diligence of a messenger, the hopping of a dancer, the tricks of a vaulter, the breath of a Lawyer, and the basest offices a man may receive; yea, with the same paulty pelfe mony, vice is payed and sinne requited, as flatterey, murther, treason, *Maquorelage*, and what not? It is then no marvell, if vertue doth lesse willingly desire this kinde of common trash, mony, than that which is onely proper and peculiar to her selfe, and is altogether noble and generous. *Augustus* had therefore reason, to be much more niggardly and sparing of this last, than of the former, forasmuch as honour is a privilege which drawes his

CHAPTER  
VII

Of the recompences or  
rewards of  
Honour

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER VII principal essence from rarenesse : And so doth vertue  
itselfe.

Of the re-  
compences or  
rewards of  
Honour

*Cui malus est nemo, quis bonus esse potest ?*

—MART. xii. *Epig.* lxxxii. 2.

To him who good can seeme,  
Who doth none bad esteeme ?

We shall not see a man highly regarded, or extraordinarily commended, that is curiously carefull to have his children well nurtured, because it is a common action, how just and worthy praise soever it be : no more than one great tree, where the forrest is full of such. I doe not thinke that any Spartane Citizen did boastingly glorifie himselfe for his valor, because it was a popular vertue in that Nation : And as little for his fidelity, and contempt of riches. There is no recompence fals unto vertue, how great soever it be, if it once have past into custome : And I wot not whether we might call it great, being common. Since then the rewards of honour, have no other prize and estimation than that few enjoy it, there is no way to disannull them, but to make a largesse of them. Were there now more men found deserving the same than in former ages, yet should not the reputation of it be corrupted. And it may easily happen that more deserve it : For, there is no vertue, doth so easily spread it selfe as military valiancie. There is another, true, perfect, and Philosophicall, whereof I speake not (I use this word according to our custome) farre greater and more full than this, which is a force and assurance of the soule, equally contemning all manner of contrarie accidents, upright, uniforme, and constant, whereof ours is but an easie and glimmering raie. Custome, institution, example and fashion, may effect what ever they list in the establishing of that I speake of, and easily make it vulgare, as may plainely bee seene by the experience our civill warres give us of it.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

And whosoever could now joyne us together, and eagerly flesh all our people to a common enterprise, we should make our ancient military name and chivalrous credit to flourish againe. It is most certaine that the recompence of our order did not in former times only concerne prowis, and respect valour; it had a further aime. It was never the reward or payment of a valiant souldier; but of a famous Captaine. The skill to obey could not deserve so honorable an hire: for, cast we backe our eyes to antiquity, we shall perceiue, that for the worthy obtaining thereof, there was required more universall warre-like expertnesse, and which might imbrace the greatest part, and most parts of a military man; *Neque enim eadem militares et imperatoriae artes sunt*; For the same arts and parts belong not to a generall and common Souldier; and who besides that, should also bee of a fit and accommodable condition for such a dignitie. But I say, that if more men should now adayes be found worthy of it, than have beene heretofore, yet should not our Princes be more liberall of it: and it had beene much better, not to bestow it upon all them to whom it was due, than for ever to lose, (as of late we have done) the use of so profitable an invention. *No man of courage vouchsafeth to advantage himselfe of that which is common unto many.* And those which in our dayes, have least merited that honourable recompence, seeme, in all apparence, most to disdaine it, by that meanes to place themselves in the ranke of those to whom the wrong is offered by unworthy bestowing and vilifying of that badge, which particularly was due unto them. Now by defacing and abolishing this to suppose, suddenly to be able to bring into credit, and renue a semblable custome, is no convenient enterprise, in so licentious, so corrupted, and so declining an age, as is this wherein we now live. And it will come to passe that the last shall

CHAPTER  
VII

Of the recompences or  
rewards of  
Honour

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VII

Of the recompences or  
rewards of  
Honour

even from her birth incur the incommodities, which have lately ruined and overthrowne the other. The rules of this new orders-dispensation had need to be otherwise wrested and constrained, for to give it authority: and this tumultuous season is not capable of a short and ordered bridle. Besides, before a man is able to give credit unto it, it is requisite a man lose the memory of the first, and of the contempt whereinto it is fallen. This place might admit some discourse upon the consideration of valour, and difference betweene this vertue and others: But *Plutarch* having often spoken of this matter, it were in vaine here for mee to repeat what he sayes of it. This is worthy to be considered, that our nation giveth the chiefe preheminance of all vertue unto valiancie, as the Etymology of the word sheweth, which commeth of valour, or worth: and that according to our received custome, when after the phrase of our court and nobility we speake of a worthy man, or of an honest man, we thereby inferre no other thing than a valiant man; after the usuall Roman fashion. For, the generall denomination of vertue doth amongst them take her Etymology, of force or might. The only proper and essentiall forme of our nobility in *France*, is military vocation. It is very likely, that the first vertue that ever appeared amongst men, and which to some hath given preheminance over others, hath beene this by which the strongest and more courageous have become masters over the weakest, and purchased a particular ranke and reputation to themselves: Whereby this honour and dignity of speech is left unto it: or else these nations being very warlike, have given the price unto that of vertues, which was the worthiest and more familiar unto them. Even as our passion, and this heart-panting, and mind-vexing carefull diligence, and diligent carefulnesse, which we continually apprehend about womens



## THE SECOND BOOKE


chastity, causeth; also that a good woman, an honest woman, a woman of honour and vertue, doth in effect and substance, signifie no other thing unto us, than a chaste wife or woman; as if to bind them to this duty, we did neglect all others, and gave them free liberty to commit any other fault, to covenant with them, never to quit or forsake this one.

CHAPTER  
VII

Of the recompences or  
rewards of  
Honour

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

*Of the affection of fathers to their children  
To the Lady of Estissac*

 ADAME, if strangenesse doe not save, or novelty shield mee, which are wont to give things reputation, I shall never, with honesty, quit my selfe of this enterprise; yet is it so fantastickall, and beares a shew so different from common custome, that that may haply purchase it free passage. It is a melancholy humor, and consequently a hatefull enemy to my naturall complexion, bred by the anxietie, and produced by the anguish of carking care, whereinto some yeares since I cast my selfe, that first put this humorous conceipt of writing into my head. And finding my selfe afterward wholly unprovided of subject, and void of other matter; I have presented my selfe unto my selfe for a subject to write, and argument to descant upon. It is the only booke in the world of this kinde, and of a wilde extravagant designe. Moreover, there is nothing in it worthy the marking but this fantasticalnesse. For, to so vaine a ground and base a subject, the worlds best workman, could never have given a fashion deserving to be accompted of. Now (worthy Lady)

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

sithence I must pourtray my selfe to the life, I should have forgotten a part of importance, if therewithall I had not represented the honour I have ever yeelded to your deserts, which I have especially beene willing to declare in the forefront of this Chapter; Forasmuch as amongst your other good parts, and commendable qualities, that of loving amity, which you have shewen to your children, holdeth one of the first rankes. Whosoever shall understand and know the age, wherein your late husband the Lord of *Estissac* left you a Widdow, the great and honorable matches have beene offered you (as worthy and as many as to any other Lady in *France* of your condition) the constant resolution, and resolute constancie, wherewith so many yeares you have sustained, and even in spight, or athwart so manifold thorny difficulties; the charge and conduct of their affaires, which have tossed, turmoyled and removed you in all corners of *France*, and still hold you besieged; the happy and succesfull forwardnes you, which only through your wisdom or good fortune, have given them, he will easily say with mee, that in our age we have no patterne of motherly affection more exemplare, than yours. I praise God (Madam) it hath beene so well employed: For, the good hopes, which the young Lord of *Estissac*, your sonne giveth of himselfe, fore-shew an undoubted assurance, that when he shall come to yeares of discretion, you shall reape the obedience of a noble, and finde the acknowledgement of a good childe. But because, by reason of his child-hood, he could not take notice of the exceeding kindnesse and many-fold offices he hath received from you, my meaning is, that if ever these my compositions shall haply one day come into his hands (when peradventure I shall neither have mouth nor speech to declare it unto him) he



## THE SECOND BOOKE

receive this testimonie in all veritie from me; which shall also more lively be testified unto him by the good effects, (whereof, if so it please God, he shall have a sensible feeling) that there is no Gentleman in *France*, more endebted to his mother, than he; and that hereafter he cannot yeeld a more certaine prooffe of his goodnes, and testimonie of his vertue, than in acknowledging and confessing you for such. If there be any truly-naturall law, that is to say, any instinct, universally and perpetually imprinted, both in beasts and us, (which is not without controversie) I may, according to mine opinion, say, that next to the care, which each living creature hath to his preservation, and to flie what doth hurt him; the affection which the engenderer beareth his off-spring, holds the second place in this ranke. And forasmuch as nature seemeth to have recommended the same unto us, ayming to extend, encrease, and advance, the successive parts or parcels of this her frame. It is no wonder if back-againie it is not so great from children unto fathers. This other Aristotelian consideration remembred: *That hee who doth benefit another, loveth him better than hee is beloved of him againe*: And hee to whom a debt is owing, loveth better, than hee that oweth: And every workman loveth his worke better, than hee should bee beloved of it againe, if it had sense or feeling. Forasmuch as we love to be; and being consisteth in moving and action. Therefore is every man, in some sort or other in his owne workmanship. *Whosoever doth a good deed, exerciseth a faire and honest action: Whosoever receiveth, exerciseth only a profitable action.* And profit is nothing so much to be esteemed or loved as honesty. Honesty is firme and permanent, affording him that did it, a constant gratification. Profit is very slipperie, and easily lost, nor is the memorie of it so sweet, or so fresh.

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

things are dearest unto us, that have cost us most: And to give, is of more cost than to take. Since it hath pleased God to endow us with some capacitie of discourse, that as beasts we should not servily be subjected to common lawes, but rather with judgement and voluntary liberty apply our selves unto them; we ought somewhat to yeeld unto the simple auctoritie of Nature: but not suffer her tyrannically to carry us away: only reason ought to have the conduct of our inclinations. As for me, my tast is strangely distasted to it's propensions, which in us are produced without the ordinance and direction of our judgement. As upon this subject I speak of, I cannot receive this passion, wherewith some embrace children scarsly borne, having neither motion in the soule, nor forme well to be distinguished in the body, whereby they might make themselves lovely or amiable. And I could never well endure to have them brought up or nursed neere about me. A true and well ordred affection ought to be borne and augmented, with the knowledge they give us of themselves; and then, if they deserve it (naturall inclination marching hand in hand with reason) to cherish and make much of them, with a perfect fatherly love and loving friendship, and conformably to judge of them if they be otherwise, alwayes yeelding our selves unto reason, notwithstanding natural power. For the most part, it goeth cleane contrary, and commonly we feele our selves more moved with the sports, idlenesse, wantonnesse, and infant-trifles of our children, than afterward we do with all their actions, when they bee men: As if we had loved them for our pastimes, as we do apes, monkies, or perokitoes, and not as man. And some that liberally furnish them with sporting bables while they be children, will miserably pinch it in the least expence for necessaries when they grow men. Nay,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

it seemeth that the jelousie we have to see them appeare into, and injoy the world, when we are ready to leave them, makes us more sparing and close-handed toward them. It vexeth and grieveth us when we see them following us at our heeles, supposing they solícite us to be gone hence: And if we were to feare that since the order of things beareth, that they cannot indeed, neither be, nor live, but by our being and life, we should not meddle to be fathers. As for mee, I deeme it a kind of cruelty and injustice, not to receive them into the share and society of our goods, and to admit them as Partners in the understanding of our domestical affaires (if they be once capable of it) and not to cut off and shut-up our commodities to provide for theirs, since we have engendred them to that purpose. It is meere injustice to see an old, crazed, sinnow-shronken, and nigh dead father sitting alone in a Chimny-corner, to enjoy so many goods as would suffice for the preferment and entertainment of many children, and in the meane while, for want of meanes, to suffer them to lose their best dayes and yeares, without thrusting them into publike service and knowledge of men; whereby they are often cast into dispaire, to seeke, by some way how unlawfull soever to provide for their necessities. And in my dayes, I have scene divers yong-men, of good houses so given to stealing and filching, that no correction could divert them from it. I know one very well alied, to whom, at the instance of a brother of his (a most honest, gallant, and vertuous Gentleman) I spake to that purpose, who boldly answered and confessed unto me, that only by the rigor and covetise of his father he had beene forced and driven to fall into such lewdnesse and wickednesse. And even at that time he came from stealing certaine jewels from a Lady, in whose bed-chamber he for-

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

tuned to come with certaine other Gentlemen when she was rising, and had almost beene taken. He made me remember a tale I had heard of another Gentleman, from his youth so fashioned and inclined to this goodly trade of pilfering, that comming afterward to be heire and Lord of his owne goods, resolved to give over that manner of life, could notwithstanding (if he chanced to come neere a shop, where he saw any thing he stood in need of) not chuse but steale the same, though afterward he would ever send mony and pay for it. And I have seene diverse so inured to that vice, that amongst their companions, they would ordinarily steale such things, as they would restore againe. I am a Gascoine, and there is no vice wherein I have lesse skill: I hate it somewhat more by complexion, than I accuse it by discourse. I doe not so much as desire another mans goods.

And although my Countrey-men be indeed somewhat more taxed with this fault, than other Provinces of *France*, yet have we seene of late dayes, and that sundry times, men well borne and of good parentage in other parts of *France*, in the hands of justice, and lawfully convicted of many most horrible robberies. I am of opinion that in regard of these debauches and lewd actions, fathers may, in some sort, be blamed, and that it is only long of them. And if any shall answer mee, as did once a Gentleman of good worth and understanding, that he thriftily endeavoured to hoard up riches, to no other purpose, nor to have any use and commodity of them, than to be honoured, respected and suingly sought unto by his friends and kinsfolkes, and that age having bereaved him of all other forces, it was the onely remedy he had left to maintaine himselfe in authority with his houshold, and keepe him from falling into contempt and disdaine of all the world. And



## THE SECOND BOOKE

truly according to *Aristotle*, not only old-age, but each imbecillity, is the promoter, and motive of covetousnesse. That is something, but it is a remedy for an evill, whereof the birth should have beene hindered, and breeding avoyded. That father may truly be said miserable, that holdeth the affection of his children tied unto him by no other meanes than by the need they have of his helpe, or want of his assistance, if that may be termed affection: *A man should yeeld himselfe respectable by vertue and sufficiency, and amiable by his goodnesse, and gentlenesse of manners.* The very cinders of so rich a matter, have their value: so have the bones and reliques of honourable men, whom we hold in respect and reverence. No age can be so crazed and drooping in a man that hath lived honourably, but must needs prove venerable, and especially unto his children, whose mindes ought so to be directed by the parents, that reason and wisdom, not necessity and need, nor rudenesse and compulsion, may make them know and performe their dutie.

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

—*et errat longe, mea quidem sententia,  
Qui imperium credat esse gravius aut stabilius,  
Vt quod sit, quam illud quod amicitia adjungitur.*

—*TEN. Adelp. act i. sce. i. 39.*

In mine opinion he doth much mistake,  
Who, that command more grave, more firme doth take,  
Which force doth get, than that which friendships make.

I utterly condemne all manner of violence in the education of a young spirit, brought up to honour and liberty. There is a kind of slavishnesse in churlish-rigor, and servility in compulsion; and I hold, that *that which cannot be compassed by reason, wisdom and discretion, can never be attained by force and constraint.* So was I brought up: they tell mee, that in all my youth, I never felt rod but

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

twice, and that very lightly. And what education I have had my selfe, the same have I given my children. But such is my ill hap, that they dye all very yong: yet hath *Leonora* my only daughter escaped this misfortune, and attained to the age of six yeares, and somewhat more: for the conduct of whose youth, and punishment of her childish faults (the indulgence of her mother applying it selfe very mildely unto it) was never other meanes used but gentle words. And were my desire frustrate, there are diverse other causes to take hold of, without reproving my discipline, which I know to be just and naturall. I would also have beene much more religious in that towards male-children, not borne to serve as women, and of a freer condition. I should have loved to have stored their minde with ingenuity and liberty. I have seene no other effects in rods, but to make childrens mindes more remisse, or more maliciously head-strong. Desire we to be loved of our children? Will we remove all occasions from them to wish our death? (although no occasion of so horrible and unnaturall wishes, can either be just or excusable) *nullum scelus rationem habet*, no ill deed hath a good reason.

Let us reasonably accommodate their life, with such things as are in our power. And therefore should not we marry so young, that our age do in a manner confound it selfe with theirs.' For, this inconvenience doth unavoidably cast us into many difficulties, and encombrances. This I speake, chiefly unto nobility, which is of an idle disposition, or loitering condition, and which (as we say) liveth only by her lands or rents: for else, where life standeth upon gaine; plurality and company of children is an easefull furtherance of husbandry. They are as many new implements to thrive, and instruments to grow rich. I was married at thirty



## THE SECOND BOOKE

yeares of age, and commend the opinion of thirty-five, which is said to be *Aristotles*. *Plato* would have no man married before thirty, and hath good reason to scoffe at them that will defer it till after fifty-five, and then marry; and condemneth their breed as unworthy of life and sustenance. *Thales* appointed the best limits, who by his mother, being instantly urged to marry whilst he was young, answered that it was not yet time; and when he came to be old, he said, it was no more time. A man must refuse opportunity to every importunate action. The ancient *Gaules* deemed it a shamefull reproach, to have the acquaintance of a woman before the age of twenty yeares; and did especially recommend unto men that sought to be trained up in warres, the carefull preservation of their maidenhead, untill they were of good yeares, forsomuch as by losing it in youth, courages are therby much weakned and greatly empaired, and by copulation with women, diverted from all vertuous action.

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

*Ma hor congiunto à giovinetta sposa,  
Lieta homai de' figli' era invilita  
Ne gli affetti di padre et di marito.*

But now conjoyn'd to a fresh-springing spouse,  
Joy'd in his children, he was thought-abased,  
In passions twixt a Sire, and husband placed.

*Muleasses* King of *Thunes*, he whom the Emperour *Charles* the fifth restored unto his owne state againe, was wont to upbraid his fathers memorie, for so dissolutely-frequenting of women, terming him a sloven, effeminate, and a lustfull engenderer of children. The Greeke story doth note *Iecus* the *Tarentine*, *Chryso*, *Astylus*, *Diopomus* and others, who to keep their bodies tough and strong for the service of the Olympicke courses, wrestlings and such bodily exercises, they did, as long as they were



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

possessed with that care, heedelessly abstaine from all venerian acts, and touching of women. In a certaine country of the Spanish *Indies*, no man was suffered to take a wife, before he were fortie yeares old, and women might marry at ten yeares of age. There is no reason, neither is it convenient, that a Gentleman of five and thirtie yeares, should give place to his sonne, that is but twenty: For then is the father as seemely, and may aswell appeare, and set himselfe forward, in all manner of voyages of warres, aswell by land as sea, and doe his Prince as good service, in court, or elsewhere, as his sonne: He hath need of all his parts, and ought truly to impart them, but so, that he forget not himselfe for others: And to such may justly that answer serve, which fathers have commonly in their mouthes: *I will not put off my clothes before I be ready to goe to bed.* But a father over-burthend with yeares, and crazed through sicknesse, and by reason of weaknessse and want of health, barred from the common societie of men, doth both wrong himselfe, injure his, idely and to no use to hoord up, and keepe close a great heape of riches, and deale of pelfe. He is in state good enough, if he be wise to have a desire to put off his clothes to goe to bed. I will not say to his shirt, but to a good warme night-gowne: As for other pompe and trash whereof hee hath no longer use or need; hee ought willingly to distribute and bestow them amongst those, to whom by naturall decree they ought to belong. It is reason he should have the use, and bequeath the fruition of them, since nature doth also deprive him of them, otherwise without doubt there is both envy and malice stirring. The worthiest action, that ever the Emperour *Charles* the fifth performed was this, in imitation of some ancients of his quality, that he had the discretion to know, that reason commanded

## THE SECOND BOOKE

us, to strip or shift our selves when our cloathes trouble and are too heavy for us, and that it is high time to goe to bed, when our legs faile us. He resigned his meanes, his greatnesse and Kingdome to his Sonne, at what time he found his former undanted resolution to decay, and force to conduct his affaires, to droope in himselfe, together with the glory he had thereby acquired.

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

*Salve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne  
Pereat ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat.*

—HOR. i. Ep. i. 8.

If you be wise, the horse growne-old betimes cast-off,  
Lest he at last fall lame, foulter, and breed a skoffe.

This fault, for a man not to be able to know himselfe betimes, and not to feele the impuissance and extreme alteration, that age doth naturally bring, both to the body and the minde (which in mine opinion is equall, if the minde have but one halfe) hath lost the reputation of the most part of the greatest men in the world. I have in my dayes both seene and familiarly knowen some men of great authority, whom a man might easily discern, to be strangely fallen from that ancient sufficiency, which I know by the reputation they had thereby attained unto in their best yeares. I could willingly for their honors sake have wisht them at home about their owne businesse, discharged from all negotiations of the commonwealth and employments of war, that were no longer fit for them. I have sometimes beene familiar in a Gentlemans house, who was both an old man and a widdower, yet lusty of his age. This man had many daughters marriageable, and a sonne growne to mans state, and ready to appeare in the world; a thing that drew-on, and was the cause of great charges, and many visitations, wherein he tooke but little pleasure, not only for the continuall care hee



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

rept ago,  
and to  
children

★

had to save, but more by reason of his age, hee had betaken himselfe to a manner of life farre different from ours. I chanced one day to tell him somewhat boldly (as my custome is) that it would better seeme him to give us place, and resigne his chiefe house to his sonne (for he had no other mannor-house conveniently well furnished) and quietly retire himselfe to some farme of his, where no man might trouble him, or disturbe his rest, since he could not otherwise avoid our importunitie, seeing the condition of his children; who afterward followed my counsell, and found great ease by it. It is not to be said, that they have any thing given them by such a way of obligation, which a man may not recall againe: I, that am ready to play such a part, would give over unto them the full possession of my house, and enjoying of my goods, but with such libertie and limited condition, as if they should give me occasion, I might repent my selfe of my gift, and revoke my deed. I would leave the use and fruition of all unto them, the rather because it were no longer fit for me to weald the same. And touching the disposing of all matters in grosse, I would reserve what I pleased unto my selfe. Having ever judged, that it must be a great contentment to an aged father, himselfe to direct his children in the government of his household affaires, and to be able whilst himselfe liveth, to checke and controule the demeanors, storing them with instruction and advised counsell, according to the experience he hath had of them, and himselfe to addresse the ancient honour and order of his house in the hands of his successours, and that way warrant himselfe of the hopes hee may conceive of their future conduct and after successe. And to this effect, I would not shun their company. I would not be far from them, but as much as the condition of my age would permit, enjoy and be a partner of



## THE SECOND BOOKE

their sports, mirths, and feasts. If I did not continually live amongst them (as I could not wel without offending their meetings and hindering their recreation, by reason of the peevish frowardnesse of my age, and the trouble of my infirmities, and also without forcing their rules, and resisting the forme of life, I should then follow) I would at least live neere them, in some corner of my house, not the best and fairest in shew, but the most easefull and commodious. And not as some yeares since, I saw a Deane of S. *Hillarie* of Poictiers, reduced by reason and the incommoditie of his melancholy to such a continuall solitarinesse, that when I entered into his chamber he had never removed one step out of it in two and twenty yeares before: yet had all his faculties free and easie, onely a rheume excepted that fell into his stomacke. Scarse once a weeke would he suffer any body to come and see him. Hee would ever be shut up in his chamber all alone, where no man should come, except a boy, who once a day brought him meat, and who might not tarry there, but as soone as he was in, must go out againe. All his exercise was sometimes to walke up and downe his chamber, and now and then reade on some booke (for he had some understanding of letters) but obstinately resolved to live and dye in that course, as he did shortly after. I would endeavour by a kinde of civill demeanour and milde conversation, to breede and settle in my children a true-harty-loving friendship, and unfained good will towards me. A thing easily obtained amongst well-borne mindes; For, if they prove, or be such surly-furious beasts, or given to churlish disobedience, as our age bringeth forth thousands, they must as beasts be hated, as churls neglected, and as degenerate avoided. I hate this custome, to forbid children to call their fathers father, and to teach them another strange name, as

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

of more reverence: As if nature had not sufficiently provided for our authoritie. We call God-almighty by the name of father, and disdain our children should call us so. I have reformed this fault in mine owne household. It is also folly and injustice to deprive children, especially being of competent age, of their father's familiaritie, and ever to shew them a surly, austere, grim, and disdainfull countenance, hoping thereby to keepe them in awfull feare and duteous obedience. For, it is a very unprofitable proceeding, and which maketh fathers yrkesome unto children; and which is worse, ridiculous. They have youth and strength in their hands, and consequently, the breath and favour of the world; and doe with mockerie and contempt receive these churlish fierce, and tyrannicall countenances, from a man that hath no lusty bloud left him, neither in his heart, nor in his vaines; meere bug-beares, and scar-crowes, to scare birdes with all. If it lay in my power to make my selfe feared, I had rather make my selfe beloved. There are so many sorts of defects in age, and so much impuissance: It is so subject to contempt, that the best purchase it can make, is the good will, love and affection of hers. Commandement and feare are no longer her weapons. I have knowen one whose youth had beene very imperious and rough, but when he came to mans age, although hee live in as good plight and health as may be, yet he chafeth, he scoldeth, he brawleth, he fighteth, he sweareth, and biteth, as the most boistrous and tempestuous master of *France*, he frets and consumes himselfe with carke and care and vigilancy (al which is but a jugling and ground for his [familie] to play upon, and cozen him the more) as for his goods, his garners, his cellers, his coffers, yea his purse, whilst himselfe keepes the keyes of them close in his bosome, and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

under his boulder, as charily as he doth his eyes, other enjoy and command the better part of them; whilst he pleaseth and flattereth himselfe, with the niggardly sparing of his table, all goth to wracke, and is lavishly wasted in divers corners of his house, in play, in riotous spending, and in soothingly entertaining the accompts or tales of his vaine chafing, foresight and providing. Every man watcheth and keepeth sentinell against him, if any silly or heedlesse servant doe by fortune apply himselfe unto it, he is presently made to suspect him: A quality on which age doth immediately bite of it selfe. How many times hath he vaunted and applauding himselfe told me of the strict orders of his house, of his good husbandry, of the awe he kept his household in, and of the exact obedience, and regardfull reverence he received of all his family, and how cleare-sighted he was in his owne businesse:

*Ille solus nescit omnia.*

—TEN. *Adel.* act iv. scen. ii. 9.

Of all things none but he,  
Most ignorant must be.

I know no man that could produce more parts, both naturall and artificiall, fit to preserve his masterie, and to maintaine his absolutenesse, than he doth; yet is hee cleane false from them like a childe. Therefore have I made choice of him, amongst many such conditions that I know, as most exemplare. It were a matter becomming a scholasticall question, whether it be better so, or otherwise. In his presence all things give place unto him. This vaine course is ever left unto his authority, that he is never gaine-said. He is had in awe, he is feared, he is beleev'd, he is respected his belly-full. Doth he discharge any boy or servant? he presently trusseth up his packe, then is he gone; but whither? onely out of his sight, not

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

out of his house. The steps of age are so slow, the senses so troubled, the minde so distracted, that he shall live and doe his office, a whole yeare in one same house, and never be perceivd. And when fit time or occasion serveth, Letters are produced from farre places, humbly suing, and pittingly complayning, with promises to doe better, and to amend, by which he is brought into favour and office againe. Doth the master make any bargaine, or dispatch that pleaseth not? it is immediatly smothered and suppressed, soone after forging causes, and devising colourable excuses, to excuse the want of execution or answer. No forraine Letters being first presented unto him, he seeth but such as are fit for his knowledge. If peradventure they come unto his hands, as he that trusteth some one of his men to reade them unto him, he will presently devise what he thinketh good, whereby they often invent, that such a one seemeth to aske him forgiveness, that wrongeth him by his Letter. To conclude, he never lookes into his owne businesse, but by a disposed, designed and as much as may be pleasing image, so contrived by such as are about him, because they will not stirre up his choler, move his impatience, and exasperate his frowardnesse. I have seene under different formes, many long and constant, and of like effect œconomies. It is ever proper unto women, to be readily bent to contradict and crosse their husbands. They will with might and maine hand over head, take hold of any colour to thwart and withstand them: the first excuse they meet with, serves them as a plenary justification. I have seene some, that would in grosse steale from their husbands, to the end (as they told their Confessors) they might give the greater almes. Trust you to such religious dispensations. They thinke no liberty to have, or

## THE SECOND BOOKE

managing to possesse sufficient authority, if it come from their husbands consent: They must necessarily usurpe it, either by wily craft or maine force, and ever injuriously, thereby to give it more grace and authoritie. As in my Discourse, when it is against a poore old man, and for children, then take they hold of this Title, and therewith gloriously serve their turne and passion, and as in a common servitude, easily usurpe and monopolize against his government and domination. If they be men-children, tall, of good spirit and forward, then they presently suborne, either by threats, force or favour, both Steward, Bailiffe, Clarke, Receiver, and all the Fathers Officers, and Servant. Such as have neither wife nor children, doe more hardly fall into this mischief: but yet more cruelly and unworthily. Old *Cato* was wont to say, *So many servants, so many enemies*. Note whether according to the distance, that was betweene the purity of his age, and the corruption of our times, he did not forewarne us, that *Wives, Children, and Servants are to us so many enemies*. Well fits it decrepitude to store us with the sweet benefit of ignorance and unperceiving facility wherewith we are deceived.

If we did yeeld unto it, what would become of us? Doe we not see that even then, if we have any suits in law, or matters to be decided before Judges, both Lawyers and Judges, will commonly take part with, and favour our childrens causes against us, as men interested in the same? And if I chance not to spy, or plainly perceive how I am cheated, cozoned and beguiled, I must of necessitie discover in the end, how I am subject and maybe cheated, beguiled, and cozoned. And shall the tongue of man ever bee able to expresse the unvaluable worth of a friend, in comparison of these civill bonds? The lively image and Idea whereof, I perceive to be

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

amongst beasts so unspotted. Oh with what religion doe I respect and observe the same! If others deceive me, yet do I not deceive my selfe, to esteeme my selfe capable, and of power to looke unto my selfe, nor to trouble my braines to yeeld my selfe unto it. I doe beware and keepe my selfe from such treasons, and cunny-catching in mine owne bosome, not by an unquiet, and tumultuary curiosity, but rather by a diversion and resolution. When I heare the state of any one reported or discoursed of, I amuse not my selfe on him, but presently cast mine eyes on my selfe, and all my wits together, to see in what state I am, and how it goeth with me. Whatsoever concerneth him, the same hath relation to me. His fortunes forewarne me, and summon up my spirits that way. *There is no day nor houre, but we speake that of others, we might properly speake of our selves, could we as well enfold, as we can unfold our consideration.* And many Authours doe in this manner wound the protection of their cause, by over-rashly running against that which they take hold-of, thirling such darts at their enemies, that might with much more advantage be cast at them. The Lord of *Monluc*, late one of the Lord Marshals of *France*, having lost his sonne, who died in the Iland of *Madera* a worthy, forward and gallant young gentleman, and truely of good hope; amongst other his griefes and regrets, did greatly move me to condole, the infinite displeasure and hearts-sorrow that he felt, inasmuch as he had never communicated and opened himselfe unto him; for, with his austere humour and continuall endeavoring to hold a grimme-stern-fatherly gravity over him, he had lost the meanes, perfectly to finde and throughly to know his sonne, and so to manifest unto him the extreme affection he bare him, and the worthy judgement he made of his vertue. Alas (was he wont to say) the poore lad saw never



## THE SECOND BOOKE

any thing in me, but a severe-surly-countenance, full of disdain, and haply was possessed with this conceit, that I could neither love nor esteeme him according to his merits. Ay-me, to whom did I reserve, to discover that singular and loving affection, which in my soule I bare unto him? Was it not he that should have had all the pleasure and acknowledgement thereof? I have forced and tormented my selfe to maintaine this vaine maske, and have utterly lost the pleasure of his conversation, and therewithal his good will, which surely was but faintly cold towards me, forsomuch as he never received but rude entertainment of mee, and never felt but a tyrannicall proceeding in me towards him. I am of opinion, his complaint was reasonable and well grounded. For, as I know by certaine experience, there is no comfort so sweet in the losse of friends, as that our owne knowledge or conscience tels us, we never omitted to tell them everything, and expostulate all matters unto them, and to have had a perfect and free communication with them. Tell me my good friend, am I the better or the worse by having a taste of it? Surely I am much the better. His griefe doth both comfort and honour mee. Is it not a religious and pleasing office of my life, for ever to make the obsequies thereof? Can there be any pleasure worth this privation? I doe unfold and open my selfe as much as I can to mine owne people, and willingly declare the state of my will and judgment toward them, as commonly I doe towards all men: I make haste to produce and present my selfe, for I would have no man mistake me, in what part soever. Amongst other particular customes, which our ancient Gaules had, (as *Cæsar* affirmeth) this was one, that children never came before their fathers, nor were in any publike assembly seene in their company, but when they began to beare armes; as if they

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

would infer, that then was the time, fathers should admit them to their acquaintance and familiarity. I have also observed another kinde of indiscretion in some fathers of our times, who during their owne life, would never be induced to acquaint or impart unto their children, that share or portion, which by the Law of Nature, they were to have in their fortunes: Nay, some there are, who after their death bequeath and commit the same auctority, over them and their goods, unto their wives, with full power and law to dispose of them at their pleasure. And my selfe have knowen a Gentleman, a chiefe officer of our crowne, that by right and hope of succession (had he lived unto it) was to inherit above fifty thousand crownes a yeere good land, who at the age of more than fifty yeeres fell into such necessity and want, and was run so farre in debt, that he had nothing left him, and as it is supposed died for very need; whilst his mother in her extreme decrepitude, enjoyed all his lands and possessed all his goods, by vertue of his fathers will and testament, who had lived very neere foure-score years. A thing (in my conceit) no way to be commended, but rather blamed. Therefore doe I thinke, that a man but little advantaged or bettered in estate, who is able to live of himselfe, and is out of debt, especially if he have children, and goeth about to marry a wife, that must have a great joynter out of his lands, assuredly there is no other debt, that brings more ruine unto houses then that. My predecessors have commonly followed this counsell, and so have I, and all have found good by it. But those that dissuade us from marrying of rich wives, lest they might proove over disdainefull and peevish, or lesse tractable and loving, are also deceived to make us neglect and for-goe a reall commoditie, for so frivolous a conjecture. To an unreasonable woman,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

it is all one cost to her, whether they passe under one reason, or under another. *They love to be where they are most wronged.* Injustice doth allure them; as the honour of their vertuous actions enticeth the good. And by how much richer they are, so much more milde and gentle are they: as more willingly and gloriously chaste, by how much fairer they are. Some colour of reason there is, men should leave the administration of their goods and affaires unto mothers, whilst their children are not of competent age, or fit according to the lawes to manage the charge of them: And ill hath their father brought them up, if he cannot hope, these comming to yeares of discretion, they shal have no more wit, reason, and sufficiencie, than his wife, considering the weaknesse of their sexe. Yet truly were it as much against nature, so to order things, that mothers must wholly depend of their childrens discretion. They ought largely and competently to be provided, wherewith to maintaine their estate, according to the quality of their house and age: because *need and want is much more unseemely and hard to be indured in women, than in men:* And children rather than mothers ought to be charged therewith. In generall, my opinion is, that the best distribution of goods, is when we die, to distribute them according to the custome of the Country. The Lawes have better thought upon them than we: And better it is to let them erre in their election, than for us rashly to hazard to faile in ours. They are not properly our owne, since without us, and by a civil prescription, they are appointed to certaine successours. And albeit we have some further liberty, I thinke it should be a great and most apparant cause to induce us to take from one, and barre him from that, which Fortune hath allotted him, and the common Lawes and Justice hath called him unto: And that against

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

reason wee abuse this liberty, by suting the same unto our private humours and frivolous fantasies. My fortune hath beene good, inasmuch as yet it never presented mee with any occasions, that might tempt or divert my affections from the common and lawful ordinance. I see some, towards whom it is but labour lost, carefully to endeavour to doe any good offices. *A word ill taken defaceth the merit of ten yeeres.* Happy he, that at this last passage is ready to sooth and applaud their will. The next action transporteth him; not the best and most frequent offices, but the freshest and present worke the deed. They are people that play with their wils and testaments, as with apples and rods, to gratifie or chastize every action of those who pretend any interest thereunto. It is a matter of over-long pursute, and of exceeding consequence, at every instance to be thus dilated, and wherein the wiser sort establish themselves once for all, chiefly respecting reason, and publike observance. We somewhat over-much take these masculine substitutions to hart, and propose a ridiculous eternity unto our names. We also over-weight such vaine future conjectures, which infant-spirits give-us. It might peradventure have beene deemed injustice, to displace me from out my rancke, because I was the dullest, the slowest, the unwillingest, and most leaden-pated to learne my lesson or any good, that ever was, not onely of all my brethren, but of all the children in my Countrie; were the lesson concerning any exercise of the minde or body. It is follie to trie anie extraordinarie conclusions upon the trust of their divinations, wherein we are so often deceived. If this rule may be contradicted, and the destinies corrected, in the choice they have made of our heires, with so much more apparence, may it be done in consideration of some remarkable and enormous

## THE SECOND BOOKE

corporall deformitie; a constant and incorrigible vice; and according to us great esteemers of beautie; a matter of important prejudice. The pleasant dialogue of *Plato* the law-giver, with his citizens, will much honor this passage. Why then (say they) perceiving their end to approach, shall we not dispose of that which is our owne, to whom and according as we please? Oh Gods what cruelty is this? That it shall not be lawfull for us, to give or bequeath more or lesse according to our fantasies, to such as have served us, and taken paines with us in our sicknesses, in our age, and in our busines? To whom the Law-giver answereth in this manner; My friends (saith he) who doubtlesse shall shortly die, it is a hard matter for you, both to know your selves, and what is yours, according to the *Delphike* inscription: As for me, who am the maker of your lawes, I am of opinion that neither your selves are your owne, nor that which you enjoy. And both you and your goods, past and to come, belong to your familie; and moreover both your families and your goods are the common wealths: Wherefore, lest any flatterer, either in your age, or in time of sicknes, or any other passion, should unadvisedly induce you to make any unlawfull convayance or unjust will and testament, I will looke to you and keepe you from it. But having an especiall respect both to the universall interest of your Citie, and particular state of your houses, I will establish lawes, and by reason make you perceive and confesse that *a particular commoditie ought to yeeld to a publike benefit*. Follow that course meereley, whereto humane necessitie doth call you. To me it belongeth, who have no more regard to one thing, than to another, and who as much as I can, take care for the general, to have a regardfull respect of that which you leave behind you. But to returne to my former discourse, me thinkes, we

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

seldome see that woman borne, to whom the superioritie or majestie over men is due, except the motherly and naturall; unlesse it be for the chastisement of such, as by some fond-febricitant humor have voluntarily submitted themselves unto them: But that doth nothing concerne old women, of whom we speake here. It is the apparance of this consideration, hath made us to frame, and willingly to establish this law (never seene elsewhere) that barreth women from the succession of this crowne, and there are few principalities in the world, where it is not alleaged, aswel as here, by a likely and apparant reason, which authoriseth the same. But fortune hath given more credit unto it in some places, than in other some. It is dangerous to leave the dispensation of our succession unto their judgement, according to the choyse they shall make of their children, which is most commonly unjust and fantasticall. For, the same unrulie appetite, and distasted relish, or strange longings, which they have when they are great with child, the same have they at al times in their minds. They are commonly seene to affect the weakest, the simplest and most abject, or such (if they have any) that had more need to sucke. For, wanting reasonable discourse to chuse, and embrace what they ought, they rather suffer themselves to be directed, where natures impressions are most single, as other creatures, which take no longer knowledge of their young ones, than they are sucking. Moreover, experience doth manifestly shew unto us, that the same naturall affection, to which we ascribe so much authoritie, hath but a weake foundation. For a very small gaine, we daily take mothers owne children from them and induce them to take charge of ours; Doe we not often procure them to bequeath their children to some fond, filthie, sluttish, and unhealthie nurce, to whom we would be very loth to commit ours, or to some brutish Goat,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

not onely forbidding them to nurse and feed their owne children (what danger soever may betide them) but also to have any care of them, to the end they may the more diligently follow, and carefully attend the service of ours? Whereby wee soone see through custome a certaine kinde of bastard-affection to be engendred in them, more vehement than the naturall, and to be much more tender and carefull for the welfare and preservation of other mens children, than for their owne. And the reason why I have made mention of Goats, is, because it is an ordinarie thing round about me where I dwell, to see the countrie women, when they have not milke enough to feed their infants with their owne breasts, to call for Goats to helpe them. And my selfe have now two lackies wayting upon me, who except it were eight daies never suck't other milke than Goats; They are presently to come at call, and give young infants sucke, and become so well acquainted with their voice, that when they heare them crie, they runne forthwith unto them. And if by chance they have any other child put to their teats, than their nursing, they refuse and reject him, and so doth the childe a strange Goat. My selfe saw that one not long since, from whom the father tooke a Goat, which he had sucked two or three daies, because he had but borrowed it of one of his neighbours, who could never be induced to sucke any other, whereby he shortly died; and as I verily thinke, of meere hunger. *Beasts as well as we doe soone alter, and easily bastardize their naturall affection.* I beleeve, that in that, which *Herodotus* reporteth of a certaine province of *Libia*, there often followeth great error and mistaking. He saith, that men doe indifferently use, and as it were in common frequent women; And that the childe as soone as he is able to goe, comming to any solemne meetings and great assemblies, led by a naturall instinct, findeth out his

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

owne father : where being turned loose in the midst of the multitude, looke what man the childe doth first addresse his steps unto, and then goe to him, the same is ever afterward reputed to be his right father. Now if we shall duly consider this simple occasion of loving our children, because we have begotten them, for which we call them our other selves. It seemes there is another production comming from us, and which is of no lesse recommendation and consequence. For what we engender by the minde, the fruits of our courage, sufficiencie, or spirit, are brought forth by a far more noble part, than the corporall, and are more our owne. We are both father and mother together in this generation : such fruits cost us much dearer, and bring us more honour, and chiefly if they have any good or rare thing in them. For the value of our other children, is much more theirs, than ours. The share we have in them is but little ; but of these all the beautie, all the grace, and all the worth is ours. And therefore doe they represent, and resemble us much more lively than others. *Plato* addeth moreover, that these are immortall issues, and immortalize their fathers, yea and deifie them, as *Licurgus*, *Solon*, and *Minos*. All histories being full of examples of this mutuall friendship of fathers toward their children, I have not thought it amisse to set downe some choice one of this kinde. *Heliodorus* that good Bishop of *Tricea*, loved rather to lose the dignity, profit and devotion of so venerable a Prelateship, than to for-goe his daughter, a young woman to this day commended for hir beautie, but haply somewhat more curiously and wantonly pranked-up than be-seemed the daughter of a churchman and a Bishop, and of over-amorous behaviour. There was one *Labienus* in *Rome*, a man of great worth and authority, and amongst other commendable qualities, most excellent in all maner of learning, who (as I thinke) was the



## THE SECOND BOOKE

sonne of that great *Labiennus*, chiefe of all the captaines that followed and were under *Cæsar* in the warres against the Gaules, and who afterward taking great *Pompeys* part, behaved himselfe so valiantly and so constantly, that he never forsooke him untill *Cæsar* defeated him in *Spaine*. This *Labiennus* of whom I spake, had many that envied his vertues; But above all (as it is likely) courtiers, and such as in his time were favored of the Emperors, who hated his franknesse, his fatherly humors, and distaste he bare still against tyrannie, wherewith it may be supposed he had stuffed his bookes and compositions. His adversaries vehemently pursued him before the Magistrate of *Rome*, and prevailed so far, that many of his works which he had published were condemned to be burned. He was the first on whom this new example of punishment was put in practice, which after continued long in *Rome*, and was executed on divers others, to punish learning, studies, and writings with death and consuming fire. There were neither meanes enough, or matter sufficient of crueltie, unlesse we had entermingled amongst them things, which nature hath exempted from all sense and sufferance, as reputation, and the inventions of our minde: and except we communicated corporall mischiefes unto disciplines and monuments of the Muses. Which losse *Labiennus* could not endure, nor brooke to survive those his deare, and highly-esteemed issues: And therefore caused himselfe to be carried, and shut up alive within his auncestors monument, where, with a dreadlesse resolution, he at once provided, both to kill himselfe and be buried together. It is hard to shew any more vehement fatherly affection, than that. *Cassius Severus*, a most eloquent man, and his familiar friend, seeing his Bookes burnt, exclaimed, that by the same sentence hee should therewithall be condemned to be burned alive, for

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

hee still bare and kept in minde, what they contained in them. A like accident happened to *Geruntius Cordus*, who was accused to have commended *Brutus* and *Cassius* in his Bookes. That base, servile, and corrupted Senate, and worthie of a farre worse master than *Tiberius*, adjudged his writings to be consumed by fire. And he was pleased to accompany them in their death; for, he pined away by abstaining from all manner of meat. That notable man, *Lucane*, being adjudged by that lewd varlet *Nero* to death; at the latter end of his life, when al his blood was well-nigh spent from out the veines of his arme, which by his Physitian he had caused to be opened, to hasten his death, and that a chilling cold began to seize the uttermost parts of his limbes, and approach his vital spirits, the last thing he had in memory, was some of his owne verses, written in his booke of the *Pharsalian* warres, which with a distinct voice hee repeated, and so yeelded up the ghost, having those last words in his mouth. What was that but a kinde, tender, and fatherly farwell which he tooke of his children? representing the last adiewes, and parting imbracements, which at our death we give unto our dearest issues? And an effect of that naturall inclination, which in that last extremity puts us in minde of those things, which in our life-time we have held dearest and most precious? Shall we imagine that *Epicurus*, who (as himselfe said) dying tormented with the extreme paine of the chollik, had all his comfort in the beauty of the doctrine which he left behinde him in the world, would have received as much contentment of a number of well-borne, and better-bred children (if he had had any) as he did of the production of his rich compositions? And if it had beene in his choise, to leave behind him, either a counterfeit, deformed, or ill-borne childe, or a foolish, triviall, and idle booke, not onely he, but all men in

## THE SECOND BOOKE

the world besides of like learning and sufficiency, would much rather have chosen to incur the former than the later mischief. It might peradventure be deemed impiety, in Saint *Augustine* (for example-sake) if on the one part one should propose unto him, to bury all his bookes, whence our religion receiveth so much good, or to interre his children (if in case he had any) that he would not rather chuse to bury his children, or the issue of his loynes, than the fruits of his minde. And I wot not well, whether my selfe should not much rather desire to beget and produce a perfectly-well-shaped, and excellently-qualited infant, by the acquaintance of the Muses, than by the copulation of my wife. Whatsoever I give to this, let the world allow of it as it please, I give it as purely and irrevocable, as any man can give to his corporal children. That little good which I have done him, is no longer in my disposition. He may know many things, that my selfe know no longer, and hold of me what I could not hold my selfe: and which (if need should require) I must borrow of him as of a stranger. If I be wiser than he, he is richer than I. There are few men given unto Poesie, that would not esteeme it for a greater honour, to be the fathers of *Virgils Æncidos*, than of the goodliest boy in *Rome*, and that would not rather endure the losse of the one than the perishing of the other. For, according to *Aristotle*, *Of all workemen, the Poet is principally the most amorous of his productions and conceited of his Labours*. It is not easie to be beleevd, that *Epaminondas*, who vanted to leave some daughters behind him, which unto all posterity, should one day highly honour their father (they were the two famous victories, which he had gained of the Lacedemonians) would ever have given his free consent, to change them, with the best-borne, most gorgeous, and goodliest damsels of all *Greece*: or

CHAPTER  
VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER VIII

Of the  
affection of  
fathers to  
their children.  
To the Lady  
of Estissac

that *Alexander*, and *Cæsar*, did ever wish to be deprived of the greatnesse of their glorious deeds of warre, for the commodity to have children and heires of their owne bodies, how absolutely-perfect, and well-accomplished so ever they might be. Nay, I make a great question, whether *Phidias* or any other excellent Statuary, would as highly esteeme, and dearly love the preservation, and successefull continuance of his naturall children, as he would an exquisite and match-lesse-wrought Image, that with long study, and diligent care he had perfected according unto art. And as concerning those vicious and furious passions, which sometimes have inflamed some fathers to the love of their daughters, or mothers towards their sonnes; the very same, and more partially-earnest is also found in this other kinde of childe-bearing and aliance. Witnesse that which is reported of *Pigmalion*, who having curiously framed a goodly statue, of a most singularly-beauteous woman, was so strange-fondly, and passionately surprised with the lustfull love of his owne workmanship, that the Gods through his raging importunity were faine in favour of him to give it life.

*Tentatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore  
Subsidit digitis.* —OVID, *Metam.* x. 283.

As he assaid it, th' yvorie softened much,  
And (hardnesse left) did yeeld to fingers touch.



# THE SECOND BOOKE

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### *Of the Parthians Armes*



T is a vitious, fond fashion of the Nobility and Gentry of our age, and full of nice-tendernesse, never to betake themselves to armes, except upon some urgent and extreme necessitie; and to quit them as soone as they perceive the least hope or apparance, that the danger is past: Whence ensue many disorders, and inconveniencies: For, every one running and calling for his armes when the alarum is given, some have not yet buckled their cuirace, when their fellowes are already defeated. Indeed our forefathers would have their Caske, Lance, Gantlets, and Shields carried, but so long as the service lasted, themselves would never leave-off their other peeces. Our troopes are now all confounded and disordered, by reason of bag and baggage, or carriages, of lackies, and foot-boies, which because of their masters armes they carry, can never leave them. *Titus Livius*, speaking of the French, saith, *Intolerantissima laboris corpora vix arma humeris gerebant* (Liv. dec. i. 10). *Their bodies most impatient of labour could hardly beare armour on their backs.* Divers Nations, as they did in former times, so yet at this day, are seene to goe to the warres, without any thing about them, or if they had, it was of no defence; but were all naked and bare.

### CHAPTER IX

### *Of the Parthians Armes*

*Tegmina quæ caput raptus de subere cortex.*

—Vina. *Æn.* vii. 742.

Whose caske to cover all their head,  
Was made of barked from Corke-tree fleas'd.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### IX

Of the  
Parthians  
Armes

*Alexander* the most daring and hazardous Captain that ever was, did very seldome arme himselfe: And those which amongst us neglect them, doe not thereby much empaire their reputation. If any man chance to be slaine for want of an armour, there are as many more that miscary with the over-heavy burthen of their armes, and by them are engaged, and by a counterbuffe are brused, or otherwise defeated. For in truth to see the unweildy weight of our and their thicknesse, it seemeth we but endeavour to defend our selves, and we are rather charged than covered by them. We have enough to doe, to endure the burthen of them, and are so engived and shackled in them, as if we were to fight but with the shocke or brunt of our armes: And as if we were as much bound to defend them, as they to shield us. *Cornelius Tacitus* doth pleasantly quip and jest at the men of war of our ancient Gaules, so armed, only to maintaine themselves, as they that have no meane, either to offend or to be offended, or to raise themselves being overthrowne. *Lucullus* seeing certaine Median men at armes, which were in the front of *Tigranes* Army, heavily and unweildily armed, as in an iron prison, apprehended thereby an opinion, that he might easily defeat them, and began to charge them first, and got the victory. And now that our Muskettiers, are in such credit, I thinke we shall have some invention found to immure us up, that so we may be warranted from them, and to traine us to the warres in Skonces and Bastions, as those which our fathers caused to be carried by Elephants. A humour farre different from that of *Scipio* the younger, who sharply reprooved his souldiers, because they had scattered certaine Calthrops under the water alongst a dike, by which those of the Towne that he besieged might sally out upon him, saying; *that those which assailed, should resolve to enterprise and not to*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*feare*: And had some reason to feare, that this provision might secure and lull their vigilancy asleepe to guard themselves. Moreover he said to a young man, that shewed him a faire shield he had; Indeed good youth, it is a faire one, but a *Roman souldier ought to have more confidence in his right hand, than in his left*. It is onely custome that makes the burthen of our armes intolerable unto us.

CHAPTER  
IX

Of the  
Parthians  
Armes

*L' usbergo in dosso haveano, e' l' elmo in testa,  
Duo di quelli guerrier de' quali io canto.  
Ne notte o di dopo ch' entraro in questa  
Stanza, gl' havean mai messi da canto;  
Che facile à portar come la vesta  
Era lor, perche in uso l' havean tanto.*

—*ARIOSO, Orl. can. xii. stan. 30.*

Cuirasse on backe did those two warriors beare,  
And caske on head, of whom I make report,  
Nor day, nor night, after they entred there,  
Had they them laid aside from their support:  
They could with ease them as a garment weare,  
For long time had they used them in such sort.

The Emperour *Caracalla* in leading of his Army was ever wont to march afoot armed at all assaies. The Roman footmen caried not their morions, sword and target only, as for other armes (saith *Cicero*) they were so accustomed to weare them continually, that they hindered them no more than their limbs: *Arma enim, membra militis esse dicunt*: for they say armor and weapon, are a souldiers limbs. But therewithal such victuals as they should need for a fortnight and a certaine number of stakes, to make their rampards or palisadoes with; so much as weighed threescore pound weight. And *Marius* his souldiers thus loden, marching in battal-array, were taught to march five leagues in five houres, yes six if need required. Their military discipline was much more laboursome than ours: So did it produce far different effects. *Scipio* the yonger reforming his army in *Spaine*,



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER IX

Of the  
Parthians  
Armes

appointed his souldiers to eat no meat but standing, and nothing sodden or rosted. It is worth the remembrance how a Lacedemonian souldier being in an expedition of warre, was much noted and blamed, because hee was once seene to seeke for shelter under a house: They were so hardened to endure all manner of labour and toyle, that it was counted a reprochfull infamy for a souldier to be seene under any other rooffe than that of heavens-vault, in what weather soever: Were we to doe so, we should never lead our men far. *Marcellinus* a man well trained in the Roman wars, doth curiously observe the manner which the Parthians used to arme themselves, and noteth it so much the more, by how much it was far different from the Romans. They had (saith he) certaine armes so curiously enterwrought as they seemed to be made like feathers, which nothing hindered the stirring of their bodies, and yet so strong, that our darts hitting them, did rather rebound, or glance by, than hurt them (they be the scales our ancestors were so much wont to use). In another place, they had (saith he) their horses stiffe and strong, covered with thicke hides and themselves armed from head to foot, with massie iron plates so artificially contrived, that where the joynts are, there they furthered the motion, and helped the stirring. A man would have said, they had been men made of yron: For they had peeces so handsomly fitted and so lively representing the forme and parts of the face; that there was no way to wound them, but at certaine little holes before their eyes, which served to give them some light, and by certaine chinckes about their nostrils, by which they hardly drew breath.

*Flexilis inductis hamatur lamina membris,  
Horribilis visu, credas simulacra moveri  
Ferrea, cognatoque viros spirare metallo.*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Par l'exilits equis, ferrata fronte minantur,  
Ferratosque movent securi vulneris armos.*

—CLAUD. in *Ruff.* ii. 358.

### CHAPTER IX

Of the  
Parthians  
Armes

The bending plate is hook't on limbes ore-spread,  
Fearefull to sight, steele images seem'd lead,  
And men to breathe in mettall with them bred,  
Like furniture for horse, with steeled head,  
They threat, and safe from wound,  
With barr'd limbs tread the ground.

Loe-heere a description, much resembling the equipage of a compleat French-man at armes, with all his bards. *Plutarke* reporteth that *Demetrius* caused two Armour to be made, each one weighing six score pounds, the one for himselfe, the other for *Alcinus*, the chiefe man of war, that was next to him, whereas all common Armour weighed but threescore.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### *Of Bookes*



MAKE no doubt but it shall often befall me to speake of things, which are better, and with more truth handled by such as are their crafts-masters. Here is simply an Essay of my naturall faculties, and no whit of those I have acquired. And he that shall tax me with ignorance, shall have no great victory at my hands: for hardly could I give others reason for my discourses, that give none unto my selfe, and am not well satisfied with them. He that shall make search after knowledge, let him seeke it where it is: there is nothing I professe lesse. These are but my fantasies, by which I endeavour not to make things knownen, but my selfe. They may haply one day be knownen unto me, or have bin at other times.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

according as fortune hath brought me where they were declared or manifested. But I remember them no more. And if I be a man of some reading, yet I am a man of no remembring, I conceive no certainty, except it bee to give notice, how farre the knowledge I have of it, doth now reach. Let no man busie himselfe about the matters, but on the fashion I give them. Let that which I borrow be survaied, and then tell me whether I have made good choice of ornaments, to beautifie and set foorth the invention, which ever comes from mee. For, I make others to relate (not after mine owne fantasie, but as it best falleth out) what I cannot so well expresse, either through unskill of language, or want of judgement. I number not my borrowings, but I weigh them. And if I would have made their number to prevaile, I would have had twice as many. They are all, or almost all of so famous and ancient names, that me thinks they sufficiently name themselves without mee. If in reasons, comparisons and arguments, I transplant any into my soile, or confound them with mine owne, I purposely conceale the Author, thereby to bridle the rashnesse of these hastie censures, that are so head long cast upon all manner of compositions, namely young writings, of men yet living; and in vulgare, that admit all the world to talke of them, and which seemeth to convince the conception and publike designe alike. I will have them to give *Plutarch* a bob upon mine owne lips, and vex themselves, in wronging *Seneca* in mee. My weakenesse must be hidden under such great credits. I will love him that shal trace, or unfeather me; I meane through clearenesse of judgement, and by the onely distinction of the force and beautie of my Discourses. For my selfe, who for want of memorie, am ever to seeke, how to trie and refine them, by the knowledge of their country,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

knowe perfectly, by measuring mine owne strength, that my soyle is no way capable, of some over-petious flowers, that therein I find set, and that all the fruits of my encrease could not make it amends. This am I bound to answer-for, if I hinder my selfe, if there be either vanitie, or fault in my Discourses, that I perceive not or am not able to discern, if they be shewed me. For, many faults doe often escape our eyes; but the infirmitie of judgement consisteth in not being able to perceive them, when another discovereth them unto us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgement, and we may have judgement without them: Yea, the acknowledgement of ignorance, is one of the best and surest testimonies of judgement that I can finde. I have no other Sergeant of band to marshall my rapsodies, than fortune. And looke how my humours or conceites present them-selves, so I shuffle them up. Sometimes they prease out thicke and three-fold, and other times they come out languishing one by one. I will have my naturall and ordinarie pace scene as loose, and as shuffling as it is. As I am, so I goe on plodding. And besides, these are matters, that a man may not be ignorant of, and rashly and casually to speake of them. I would wish to have a more perfect understanding of things, but I will not purchase it so deare, as it cost. My intention is to passe the remainder of my life quietly, and not laboriously, in rest, and not in care. There is nothing I will trouble or vex my selfe about, no not for Science it selfe, what esteeme soever it be-of. I doe not search and tosse over Books, but for an honest recreation to please, and pastime to delight my selfe: or if I studie, I onely endeavour to find out the knowledge that teacheth or handleth the knowledge of my selfe, and which may instruct me how to die well, and how to live well.

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER

### X

#### Of Bookes

*Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus.*

—PROPERT. iv. *El.* i. 70.

My horse must sweating runne,  
That this goale may be wonne.

If in reading I fortune to meet with any difficult points, I fret not my selfe about them, but after I have given them a charge or two, I leave them as I found them. Should I earnestly plod upon them I should loose both time and my selfe; for I have a skipping wit. What I see not at the first view, I shall lesse see it, if I opinionate my selfe upon it. I doe nothing without blithnesse; and an over obstinate continuation and plodding contention, doth dazle, dul and weary the same: My sight is thereby confounded and diminished. I must therefore withdraw-it, and at fittes goe to it againe. Even as to judge well of the lustre of scarlet we are taught to cast our eyes over it, in running it over by divers glances, sodaine glimpses, and reiterated reprisings. If one booke seeme tedious unto me, I take another, which I follow not with any earnestnesse, except it be at such houres as I am idle, or that I am weary with doing nothing. I am not greatly affected to new books, because ancient Authors are in my judgement more full and pithy: nor am I much addicted to Greeke books, forasmuch as my understanding can[not] well rid his worke with a childish and apprentice intelligence. Amongst moderne bookes meerly pleasant, I esteeme *Bocace* his *Decameron*, *Rabelais*, and the kisses of *John* the second (if they may be placed under this title) worth the paines-taking to reade them. As for *Amadis* and such like trash of writings, they had never the credit so much as to allure my youth to delight in them. This I will say more, either boldly or rashly, that this old and heavie-pased minde of mine, will no more be



## THE SECOND BOOKE

pleased with *Aristotle*, or tickled with good *Ovid*: his facility, and quaint inventions, which heretofore have so ravished me, they can now a dayes scarcely entertaine me. I speake my minde freely of all things, yea of such as peradventure exceed my sufficiencie, and that no way I hold to be of my jurisdiction. What my conceit is of them, is also to manifest the proportion of my insight, and not the measure of things. If at any time I finde my selfe distasted of *Platoes Axiochus*, as of a forceles worke, due regard had to such an Author, my judgement doth nothing beleeve it selfe: It is not so fond-hardy, or selfe-conceited, as it durst dare to oppose it selfe against the authority of so many other famous ancient judgements, which he reputeth his regents and masters, and with whom hee had rather erre. He chafeth with, and condemneth himselfe, either to rely on the superficiall sense, being unable to pierce into the centre, or to view the thing by some false lustre. He is pleased only to warrant himselfe from trouble and unrulinesse: As for weaknesse he acknowledgeth and ingeniously avoweth the same. He thinkes to give a just interpretation to the apparences which his conception presents unto him, but they are shallow and imperfect. Most of *Æsopes* fables have divers senses, and severall interpretations: Those which *Mythologize* them, chuse some kinde of colour well-suting with the fable; but for the most part, it is no other than the first and superficiall glosse: There are others more quicke, more sinnowie, more essentiall and more internall, into which they could never penetrate; and thus thinke I with them. But to follow my course; I have ever deemed that in Poesie, *Virgil*, *Lucretius*, *Catullus*, and *Horace*, doe doubtles by far hold the first ranke; and especially *Virgil* in his *Georgiks*, which I esteeme to be the most accomplished peece of worke of Poesie: In

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
X  
Of Bookes

comparison of which one may easily discern, that there are some passages in the *Æneidos*, to which the Author (had he lived) would no doubt have given some review or correction: The fifth booke whereof is (in my mind) the most absolutely perfect. I also love *Lucan*, and willingly read him, not so much for his stile, as for his owne worth, and truth of his opinion and judgement. As for good *Terence*, I allow the quaintnesse and grace of his Latine tongue, and judge him wonderfull conceited and apt, lively to represent the motions and passions of the minde, and the condition of our manners: our actions make me often remember him. I can never reade him so often, but still I discover some new grace and beautie in him. Those that lived about *Virgils* time, complained that some would compare *Lucretius* unto him. I am of opinion, that verily it is an unequall comparison; yet can I hardly assure my selfe in this opinion whensoever I finde my selfe entangled in some notable passage of *Lucretius*. If they were moved at this comparison, what would they say now of the fond, hardy and barbarous stupiditie of those which now adayes compare *Ariosto* unto him?— Nay what would *Ariosto* say of it himselfe?—

*O sæclum insipiens et infacetum.*—CATUL. *Epig.* xl. 8.

O age that hath no wit,  
And small conceit in it.

I thinke our ancestors had also more reason to cry out against those that blushed not to equall *Plautus* unto *Terence* (who makes more shew to be a Gentleman) than *Lucretius* unto *Virgil*. This one thing doth greatly advantage the estimation and preferring of *Terence*, that the father of the Roman eloquence, of men of his quality doth so often make mention of him; and the censure, which the chiefe Judge of the Roman Poets giveth of his companion.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

It hath often come unto my minde, how such as in our dayes give themselves to composing of comedies (as the Italians who are very happy in them) employ three or foure arguments of *Terence* and *Plautus* to make up one of theirs. In one onely comedy they will huddle up five or six of *Bocaces* tales. That which makes them so to charge themselves with matter, is the distrust they have of their owne sufficiency, and that they are not able to undergoe so heavie a burthen with their owne strength. They are forced to finde a body on which they may rely and leane themselves: and wanting matter of their owne wherewith to please us, they will have the story or tale to busie and amuse us: where as in my [Author] it is cleane contrary: The elegancies, the perfections and ornaments of his manner of speech, make us neglect and lose the longing for his subject. His quaintnesse and grace doe still retaine us to him. He is every where pleasantly conceited,

CHAPTER  
X  
Of Bookes

*Liquidus puroque simillimus anni*,—HOR. ii. *Epist.* ii. 120.

So clearely-neate, so neatly-cleare,  
As he a fine-pure River were,

and doth so replenish our minde with his graces, that we forget those of the fable. The same consideration drawes me somewhat further. I perceive that good and ancient Poets have shunned the affectation and enquest, not only of fantasticall, new fangled, Spagniolized, and Petrarchisticall elevations, but also of more sweet and sparing inventions, which are the ornament of all the Poeticall workes of succeeding ages. Yet is there no competent Judge, that findeth them wanting in those Ancient ones, and that doth not much more admire that smoothly equall neatnesse, continued sweetnesse, and flourishing comeliness of *Catullus* his Epigrams, than all the sharpe

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

quips, and witty girds, wherewith *Martiall* doth whet and embellish the conclusions of his. It is the same reason I spake of erewhile, as *Martiall* of himselfe. *Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cuius locum materia successerat* (MART. præf. viii.). He needed the lesse worke with his wit, in place whereof matter came in supply; The former without being moved or pricked cause themselves to be heard lowd enough: they have matter to laugh at every where, and need not tickle themselves; where as these must have foraine helpe: according as they have lesse spirit, they must have more body. They leape on horse-backe: because they are not sufficiently strong in their legs to march on foot. Even as in our dances, those base conditioned men that keepe dancing-schools, because they are unfit to represent the port and decencie of our nobilitie, endeavour to get commendation by dangerous lofty trickes, and other strange tumbler-like frisks and motions. And some Ladies make a better shew of their countenances in those dances, wherein are divers changes, cuttings, turnings, and agitations of the body, than in some dances of state and gravity, where they need but simply to tread a naturall measure, represent an unaffected cariage, and their ordinary grace; And as I have also seene some excellent Lourdans, or Clownes attired in their ordinary worky-day clothes, and with a common homely countenance, affoord us all the pleasure that may be had from their art: Prentises and learners that are not of so high a forme, to besmeare their faces, to disguise themselves, and in motions to counterfeit strange visages, and antickes, to enduce us to laughter. This my conception is no where better discerned, than in the comparison betweene *Virgils Æneidos*, and *Orlando Furioso*. The first is seene to soare aloft with full-spread wings, and with so high and strong a pitch,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

ever following his point; the other faintly to hover and flutter from tale to tale, and as it were skipping from bough to bough, alwayes distrusting his owne wings, except it be for some short flight, and for feare his strength and breath should faile him, to sit downe at every fields-end.

CHAPTER  
X

Of Bookes

*Excursusque breves tentat.*—VIRG. *Æn.* iv. 194.

Out-lobes sometimes he doth assay,  
But very short, and as he may.

Loe here then, concerning this kinde of subjects, what Authors please me best: As for my other lesson, which somewhat more mixeth profit with pleasure, whereby I learne to range my opinions, and addresse my conditions; the Bookes that serve me thereunto, are *Plutarke* (since he spake French,) and *Seneca*; Both have this excellent commodity for my humour, that the knowledge I seeke in them, is there so scatteringly and loosely handled, that whosoever readeth them is not tied to plod long upon them, whereof I am incapable. And so are *Plutarke's* little workes, and *Seneca's* Epistles, which are the best and most profitable parts of their writings. It is no great matter to draw mee to them, and I leave them where I list. For, they succeed not, and depend not one of another. Both jumpe and suit together, in most true and profitable opinions: And fortune brought them both into the world in one age. Both were Tutors unto two Roman Emperours: Both were strangers, and came from farre Countries; both rich and mighty in the common-wealth, and in credit with their masters. Their instruction is the prime and creame of Philosophy, and presented with a plaine, unaffected, and pertinent fashion. *Plutarke* is more uniforme and constant; *Seneca* more waving and diverse. This doth labour, force, and extend

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
X  
Of Bookes

himselfe, to arme and strengthen vertue against weaknesse, feare, and vitious desires; the other seemeth nothing so much to feare their force or attempt, and in a manner scorneth to hasten or change his pace about them, and to put himselfe upon his guard. *Plutarke's* opinions are Platonicall, gentle and accommodable unto civill societie: *Seneca's* Stoicall and Epicurian, further from common use, but in my conceit, more proper, particular, and more solid. It appeareth in *Seneca*, that he somewhat inclineth and yeeldeth to the tyrannie of the Emperors which were in his daies; for, I verily beleeeve, it is with a forced judgement, he condemneth the cause of those noblie-minded murtherers of *Cæsar*. *Plutarke* is every where free and open-hearted; *Seneca*, full-fraught with points and sallies, *Plutarke* stufte with matters. The former doth move and enflame you more; the latter, content, please, and pay you better: This doth guide you, the other drive you on. As for *Cicero*, of all his works, those that treat of Philosophie (namely morall) are they which best serve my turne, and square with my intent. But boldly to confesse the trueth, (For, *Since the bars of impudencie were broken downe, all curbing is taken away*) his manner of writing semeth verie tedious unto me, as doth all such-like stuffe. For, his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and Etymologies, consume the greatest part of his Works; whatsoever quick, wittie, and pithie conceit is in him, is surcharged, and confounded by those his long and far-fetcht preambles. If I bestow but one houre in reading him, which is much for me; and let me call to minde what substance, or juice I have drawne from him, for the most part, I find nothing but wind and ostentation in him: for he is not yet come to the arguments, which make for his purpose, and reasons that properly concerne the knot or pith I

## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

seek-after. These Logicall and Aristotelian ordinances are not availfull for me, who onely endeavour to become more wise and sufficient, and not more wittie or eloquent. I would have one begin with the last point: I understand sufficiently what death and voluptuousnesse are: let not a man busie himselfe to anatomize them. At the first reading of a Booke, I seeke for good and solid reasons, that may instruct me how to sustaine their assaults. It is neither grammaticall subtilties, nor logicall quiddities, nor the wittie contexture of choise words, or arguments, and syllogismes, that will serve my turne. I like those discourses that give the first charge to the strongest part of the doubt; his are but flourishes, and languish every where. They are good for Schooles, at the barre, or for Orators and Preachers, where we may slumber: and though we wake a quarter of an houre after, we may find and trace him soone enough. Such a manner of speech is fit for those Judges, that a man would corrupt by booke or crooke, by right or wrong, or for children and the common people, unto whom a man must tell all, and see what the event will be. I would not have a man go about, and labour by circumlocutions, to induce and win me to attention, and that (as our Herolds or Criers do) they shall ring out their words. Now heare me, now listen, or ho-yes. The Romanes in their Religion were wont to say, *Hoc age*; which in ours we say, *Sursum corda*. These are so many lost words for me. I come readie prepared from my house. I need no allurement nor sawce; my stomacke is good enough to digest raw meat: And whereas with these preparatives and flourishes, or preambles, they thinke to sharpen my taste, or stir my stomacke, they cloy and make it wallowish. Shall the priviledge of times excuse me from this sacrilegious boldnesse, to deeme *Platoes*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

Dialogismes to be as languishing, by over-filling and stuffing his matter? And to bewaile the time that a man, who had so many thousands of things to utter, spends about so many, so long, so vaine, and idle interloquutions, and preparatives? My ignorance shall better excuse me, in that I see nothing in the beautie of his language. I generally enquire after Bookes, that use sciences, and not after such as institute them. The two first, and *Plinie*, with others of their ranke, have no *Hoc age* in them, they will have to doe with men, that have forewarned themselves; or if they have, it is a materiall and substantiall *Hoc age*, and that hath his bodie apart. I likewise love to read the Epistles and *ad Atticum*, not onely because they containe a most ample instruction of the Historie, and affaires of his times, but much more because in them I descrie his private humours. For, (as I have said elsewhere) I am wonderfull curious, to discover and know, the minde, the soule, the genuine disposition, and naturall judgement of my Authors. A man ought to judge their sufficiencie, and not their customes, nor them by the shew of their writings, which they set forth on this worlds Theatre. I have sorrowed a thousand times, that ever we lost the booke, that *Brutus* writ of Vertue. *Oh it is a goodly thing to learne the Theorike of such as understand the practice well.* But forsomuch as the Sermon is one thing, and the Preacher an other: I love as much to see *Brutus* in *Plutarke*, as in himselfe: I would rather make choice to know certainly, what talke he had in his Tent with some of his familiar friends, the night foregoing the battel, than the speech he made the morrow after to his Armie: and what he did in his chamber or closet, than what in the Senate or market place. As for *Cicero*, I am of the common judgement, that besides learning, there was no

## THE SECOND BOOKE

exquisite excellencie in him: He was a good Citizen, of an honest-gentle nature, as are commonly fat and burly men; for so was he: But to speake truly of him, full of ambitious vanitie and remisse nicenesse. And I know not well how to excuse him, in that hee deemed his Poesie worthy to be published. It is no great imperfection, to make bad verses, but it is an imperfection in him, that he never perceived how unworthy they were of the glorie of his name. Concerning his eloquence, it is beyond all comparison, and I verily beleeve, that none shall ever equall it. *Cicero* the younger, who resembled his father in nothing, but in name, commanding in *Asia*, chanced one day to have many strangers at his board, and amongst others, one *Caestius* sitting at the lower end, as the manner is to thrust in at great mens tables: *Cicero* inquired of one of his men what he was, who told him his name, but he dreaming on other matters, and having forgotten what answere his man made him, asked him his name twice or thrice more: the servant, because he would not be troubled to tell him one thing so often, and by some circumstance make him to know him better, It is, said he, the same *Caestius*, of whom some have told you, that in respect of his owne, maketh no accompt of your fathers eloquence: *Cicero* being suddainly mooved, commaunded the said poore *Caestius* to be presently taken from the table, and well whipt in his presence: Lo-beere an uncivill and barbarous host. Even amongst those, which (all things considered) have deemed his eloquence matchlesse and incomparable others there have been, who have not spared to note some faults in it: As great *Brutus* said, that it was an eloquence, broken, halting, and disjoynted, *fractam et elumbem*: *Incoherent and sinnowlesse*. Those Orators that lived about his age, reproved

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

also in him the curious care he had of a certaine long cadence, at the end of his clauses, and noted these words, *Esse videatur*, which he so often useth. As for me, I rather like a cadence that falleth shorter, cut like Iambikes: yet doth he sometimes confound his numbers; but it is seldome: I have especially observed this one place. *Ego vero me minus diu senem esse mallet, quam esse senem, antequam essem* (Cic. *De Senect.*). *But I had rather, not be an old man so long as I might be, than to be old before I should be.* Historians are my right hand; for they are pleasant and easie: and therewithall, the man with whom I desire generally to be acquainted, may more lively and perfectly be discovered in them, than in any other composition: the varietie and truth of his inward conditions, in grosse and by retale: the diversitie of the meanes of his collection and composing, and of the accidents that threaten him. Now, those that write of mens lives, forasmuch as they amuse and busie themselves more about counsels than events, more about that which commeth from within, than that which appeareth outward; they are fittest for me: And that's the reason why *Plutarke* above all in that kind, doth best please me. Indeed I am not a little grieved that we have not a dozen of *Laertii*, or that he is not more knowne, or better understood: for, I am no lesse curious to know the fortunes and lives of these great masters of the world, than to understand the diversitie of their decrees and conceits. In this kind of studie of Historie, a man must, without distinction, tosse and turne over all sorts of Authors, both old and new, both French and others, if he will learne the things they so diversly treat-of. But me thinks that *Cæsar* above all doth singularly deserve to be studied, not onely for the understanding of the Historie, as of himselfe; so much perfection and excellencie is



## THE SECOND BOOKE

there in him more than in others, although *Sahust* be CHAPTER  
reckoned one of the number. Verily I read that <sup>X</sup>  
Author with a little more reverence and respect, than Of Bookes  
commonly men reade profane and humane Workes:  
sometimes considering him by his actions, and  
wonders of his greatnesse, and other times waighing  
the puritie and inimitable polishing and elegancie of  
his tongue, which (as *Cicero* saith) hath not onely  
exceeded all Historians, but haply *Cicero* himselfe:  
with such sinceritie in his judgement. Speaking of  
his enemies, that except the false colours, wherewith  
he goeth about to cloake his bad cause, and the  
corruption and filthinesse of his pestilent ambition,  
I am perswaded there is nothing in him to be found  
fault-with: and that he hath been over-sparing to  
speak of himselfe: for, so many notable and great  
things could never be executed by him, unlesse he  
had put more of his owne unto them, than he setteth  
downe. I love those Historians that are either verie  
simple, or most excellent. The simple who have  
nothing of their owne to adde unto the storie, and  
have but the care and diligence to collect whatsoever  
come unto their knowledge, and sincerely and faith-  
fully to register all things, without choice or culling,  
by the naked truth leave our judgement more entire,  
and better satisfied.

Such amongst others (for example sake) plaine  
and well-meaning Froisard, who in his enterprize,  
hath marched with so free and genuine a puritie,  
that having committed some over-sight, he is neither  
ashamed to acknowledge, nor afraid to correct the  
same, wheresoever he hath either notice or warning  
of it: and who representeth unto us the diversitie of  
the newes then currant, and the different reports,  
that were made unto him. The subject of an his-  
torie should be naked, bare, and formelesse; each  
man according to his capacitie or understanding may

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER <sup>X</sup>  
Of Bookes

reap commoditie out of it. The curious and most excellent have the sufficiencie to cull and chuse that, which is worthie to be knowne, and may select of two relations, that which is most likely: of the condition of Princes, and of their humors, therby they conclude their counsels, and attribute convenient words unto them: they have reason to assume authoritie unto them, to direct and shapen our beliefe unto theirs. But truly that belongs not to many. Such as are betweene both (which is the most common fashion) it is they that spoile all; they will needs chew our meat for us, and take upon them a law to judge, and by consequence to square and encline the storie according to their fantasie; for, where the judgement bendeth one way, a man cannot chuse but wrest and turne his narration that way. They undertake to chuse things worthy to bee knowne, and now and then conceal either a word or a secret action from us, which would much better instruct us: omitting such things as they understand not, as incredible: and haply such matters, as they know not how to declare, either in good Latin, or tolerable French. Let them boldly enstall their eloquence, and discourse: Let them censure at their pleasure, but let them also give us leave to judge after them: And let them neither alter nor dispence by their abridgements and choice, any thing belonging to the substance of the matter; but let them rather send it pure and entire with all her dimensions unto us. Most commonly (as chiefly in our age) this charge of writing histories is committed unto base, ignorant, and mechanicall kind of people, only for this consideration that they can speak well; as if we sought to learne the Grammer of them; and they have some reason, being only hyred to that end, and publishing nothing but their tittle-tattle to aime at

## THE SECOND BOOKE

nothing else so much. Thus with store of choice  
 and quaint words, and wyre-drawne phrases they  
 huddle up, and make a hodge-pot of a laboured  
 contexture of the reports, which they gather in the  
 market-places, or such other assemblies. *The only*  
*good histories are those that are written by such as*  
*commanded, or were imploied themselves in weighty*  
*affaires, or that were partners in the conduct of*  
*them, or that at least have had the fortune to manage*  
*others of like qualitie.* Such in a manner are all  
 the Græcians and Romans. For, many eye-witnesses  
 having written of one same subject (as it hapned  
 in those times, when Greatnesse and Knowledge  
 did commonly meet) if any fault or over-sight have  
 past them, it must be deemed exceeding light, and  
 upon some doubtfull accident. *What may a man*  
*expect at a Phisitions hand, that discourseth of warre,*  
*or of a bare Scholler, treating of Princes secret*  
*designes?* If we shall but note the religion, which  
 the Romans had in that, we need no other example:  
*Asinius Polio* found some mistaking or oversight in  
*Cæsars* Commentaries, whereinto he was false, only  
 because he could not possiblly oversee all things with  
 his owne eyes, that hapned in his Armie, but was  
 faine to relie on the reports of particular men, who  
 often related untruths unto him; or else because he  
 had not been curiously advertised, and distinctly en-  
 formed by his Lieutenants and Captaines, of such  
 matters as they in his absence had managed or  
 effected. Whereby may be seen, that *nothing is so*  
*hard, or so uncertaine to be found-out, as the cer-*  
*taintie of a Truth,* sithence no man can put any  
 assured confidence concerning the truth of a battel,  
 neither in the knowledge of him, that was Generall,  
 or commanded over it, nor in the soldiers that  
 fought, of any thing, that hath hapned amongst  
 them; except after the manner of a strict point of

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### X

### Of Bookes

law, the severall witnesses are brought and examined face to face, and that all matters be nicely and thorowly sifted by the objects and trials of the successe of every accident. Verily the knowledge we have of our own affaires is much more barren and feeble. But this hath sufficiently been handled by *Bodine*, and agreeing with my conception. Somewhat to aid the weaknesse of my memorie, and to assist her great defects; for it hath often been my chance to light upon bookes, which I supposed to be new, and never to have read, which I had not understanding diligently read and run-over many yeares before, and all bescribled with my notes: I have a while since accustomed my selfe, to note at the end of my booke (I meane such as I purpose to read but once) the time I made an end to read it, and to set downe what censure or judgement I gave of it; that so, it may at least, at another time represent unto my mind, the aire and generall Idea, I had conceived of the Author in reading him. I will here set downe the Copie of some of mine annotations, and especially what I noted upon my *Guicciardine* about ten yeares since: (For what language soever my bookes speake unto me, I speake unto them in mine owne.) He is a diligent Historiographer, and from whom in my conceit, a man may as exactly learne the truth of such affaires as passed in his time, as of any other writer whatsoever: and the rather because himselfe hath been an Actor of most part of them, and in verie honourable place. There is no signe or apparance, that ever he disguised or coloured any matter, either through hatred, malice, favour, or vanitie; whereof the free and impartiall judgements he giveth of great men, and namely of those by whom he had been advanced or employed in his important charges, as of Pope *Clement* the seaventh, beareth undoubted

## THE SECOND BOOKE

testimonie. Concerning the parts wherewith he most goeth about to prevaile which are his digressions and discourses, many of them are verie excellent, and enriched with faire ornaments, but he hath too much pleased himselfe in them: for, endeavouring to omit nothing that might be spoken, having so full and large a subject, and almost infinite, he proveth somewhat languishing, and giveth a tast of a kind of scholasticall tedious babling. Moreover, I have noted this, that of so severall and divers armes, successes, and effects he judgeth of; of so many and variable motives, alterations, and counsels, that he relateth, he never referreth any one unto vertue, religion, or conscience: as if they were all extinguished and banished the world: and of all actions, how glorious soever in apparance they be of themselves, he doth ever impute the cause of them, to some vicious and blame-worthie occasion, or to some commoditie and profit. It is impossible to imagine, that amongst so infinite a number of actions, whereof he judgeth, some one have not been produced and compassed by way of reason. No corruption could ever possesse men so universally, but that some one must of necessity escape the contagion; which makes me to feare, he hath had some distaste or blame in his passion, and it hath haply fortunèd, that he hath judged or esteemed of others according to himselfe. In my *Philip de Comines*, there is this: In him you shall find a pleasing-sweet, and gently-gliding speech, fraught with a purely-sincere simplicitie, his narration pure and unaffected, and wherein the Authours unspotted-good meaning doth evidently appeare, void of all manner of vanitie or ostentation speaking of himselfe, and free from all affection or envie speaking of others: his discourses and perswasions, accompanied more with a well-

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### X

### Of Bookes

meaning zeale, and meere veritie, than with any laboured and exquisit sufficiencie, and all-through, with gravitie and authoritie, representing a man well-borne, and brought up in high negotiations. Upon the memories and historie of Monsieur du *Bellay*: It is ever a well-pleasing thing, to see matters written by those, that have assaid how, and in what manner they ought to be directed and managed: yet can it not be denied, but that in both these Lords, there will manifestly appeare a great declination from a free libertie of writing, which clearely shineth in ancient writers of their kind: as in the Lord of *Jonville*, familiar unto Saint *Lewis*, *Eginard*, Chancellor unto *Charlemaine*; and of more fresh memorie in *Philip de Comines*. This is rather a declamation or pleading for king *Francis* against the Emperour *Charles* the fifth, than an Historie. I will not beleieve, they have altered or changed any thing concerning the generalitie of matters, but rather to wrest and turne the judgement of the events, many times against reason, to our advantage, and to omit whatsoever they supposed, to be doubtfull or ticklish in their masters life: they have made profession of it: witnesse the recoylings of the Lords of *Momorancy* and *Byron*, which therein are forgotten; and which is more, you shall not so much as find the name of the Ladie of *Estampes* mentioned at all. A man may sometimes colour, and haply hide secret actions, but absolutely to conceal that which all the world knoweth, and especially such things as have drawne on publike effects, and of such consequence, it is an inexcusable defect, or as I may say unpardonable oversight. To conclude, whosoever desireth to have perfect information and knowledge of King *Francis* the first, and of the things hapned in his time, let him addresse himselfe elsewhere, if he will



## THE SECOND BOOKE

give any credit unto me. The profit he may reap here, is by the particular [deduction] of the battels and exploits of warre, wherein these Gentlemen were present; some privie conferences, speeches, or secret actions of some Princes, that then lived, and the practices managed, or negotiations directed by the Lord of *Langeay*, in whom doubtlesse are verie many things, well-worthie to be knowne, and diverse discourses not vulgare.

CHAPTER

X

Of Bookes

### THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

#### *Of Crueltie*

**M**E thinks vertue is another manner of thing, and much more noble than the inclination unto goodnesse, which in us are ingendered. Mindes well borne, and directed by themselves, follow one same path, and in their actions represent the same visage, that the vertuous doe. But vertue importeth, and soundeth somewhat I wot not what greater and more active, than by an happy complexion, gently and peaceably, to suffer it selfe to be led or drawne, to follow reason. He that through a naturall facilitie, and genuine mildnesse, should neglect or contemne injuries receiued, should no doubt performe a rare action, and worthy commendation: But he who being toucht and stung to the quicke, with any wrong or offence receiued, should arme himselfe with reason against this furiously-blind desire of revenge, and in the end after a great conflict, yeeld himselfe master over-it, should doubtlesse doe much more. The first should doe well, the other vertuously: the one action might be termed goodnesse, the other vertue. For, *It*

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XI

#### Of Crueltie

*seemeth, that the verie name of vertue presupposeth difficultie, and inferreth resistance, and cannot well exercise it selfe without an enemie.* It is peradventure the reason why we call God good, mightie, liberall, and just, but we terme him not vertuous. His workes are all voluntarie, unforced, and without compulsion. Of Philosophers, not onely Stoicks, but also Epicurians (which endearing I borrow of the common-received opinion, which is false whatsoever the nimble saying or wittie quipping of *Arcesilaus* implieth, who answered the man that upbraided him, how divers men went from his schoole to the Epicurian, but none came from thence to him: I easily beleeve-it (said he) for *Of cocks are many capons made, but no man couZ ever yet make a cocke of a capon.* For truly, in constancie, and rigor of opinions, and strictnesse of precepts, the Epicurian Sect doth in no sort yeeld to the Stoicke. And a Stoicke acknowledging a better faith, than those disputers, who to contend with *Epicurus*, and make sport with him, make him to infer and say what he never meant, wresting and wyre-drawing his words to a contrarie sense, arguing and silogizing by the Grammarians privilege, another meaning, by the manner of his speech, and another opinion, than that they know he had, either in his minde, or manners, saith, that he left to be an Epicurian, for this one consideration amongst others, that he findeth their pitch to be over-high and inaccessible: *Et ii qui φιλόδονοι vocantur, sunt φιλόκαλοι et φιλοδίκαιοι omnesque virtutes et colunt et retinent* (SEN. *Epist.* xiii.). And those that are called lovers of pleasure, are lovers of honestie and justice, and doe both reverence and retaine all sorts of vertue. Of Stoicke and Epicurian Philosophers, I say, there are divers, who have judged, that it was not sufficient to have the minde well placed

## THE SECOND BOOKE

well ordered, and well disposed unto vertue; it was not enough to have our resolutions and discourse beyond all the affronts and checks of fortune; but that moreover, it was verie requisite, to seeke for occasions, whereby a man might come to the triall of it: They will diligently quest and seek out for paine, smart, necessitie, want, and contempt, that so they may combat them, and keep their minde in breath: *Multum sibi adjicit virtus lacessita. Virtus provoked addes much to it selfe.* It is one of the reasons why *Epaminoudas* (who was of a third sect) by a verie lawfull way refuseth some riches, fortune had put into his hands, to the end (as he saith) he might have cause to strive and resist povertie, in which want and extremitie he ever continued after.

*Socrates* did in my minde more undantedly enure himselfe to this humor, maintaining for his exercise the peevisish frowardnesse of his wife, than which no essay can be more vex-full, and is a continuall fighting at the sharpe. *Metellus* of all the Romane Senators (he onely having undertaken with the power of vertue, to endure the violence of *Saturninus Tribune* of the people in *Rome*, who by maine force went about to have a most unjust law passe in favor of the Communalitie: by which opposition, having incurred all the capital paines, that *Saturninus* had imposed on such as should refuse it) intertained those that led him to the place of execution, with such speeches: That to doe evill was a thing verie easie, and too demissely base: and to doe well where was no danger, was a common thing; but to doe well, where was both perill and opposition, was the peculiar office of a man of vertue. These words of *Metellus* doe clearely represent unto us, what I would have verified; which is, that vertue rejecteth facilitie to be her companion: And that an easefull, pleasant, and declining way, by which the regular steps of a good inclination of nature,

CHAPTER  
XI  
Of Crueltie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

XI

Of Crueltie

are directed, is not the way of true vertue. She requireth a craggie, rough, and thornie way; She would either have strange difficulties to wrestle withall (as that of *Metellus*) by whose meanes fortune her selfe is pleased to breake the roughnesse of his course; or inward encombrances, as the disordinate appetites and imperfections of our condition bring unto her. Hitherto I have come at good ease; but at the end of this discourse, one thing commeth into my minde, which is, that the soule of *Socrates*, which is [absolutely] the perfectest that ever came to my knowledge, would, according to my accompt, prove a soule deserving but little commendation: For, I can perceive no manner of violence or vicious concupisence in him: I can imagine no manner of difficultie or compulsion in the whole course of his vertue. I know his reason so powerfull, and so absolute mistresse over him, that she can never give him way to any vicious desire, and will not suffer it so much as to breed in him. To a vertue so exquisit, and so high-raised as his is, I can perswade nothing. Me thinkes I see it march with a victorious and triumphant pace, in pompe, and at ease, without let or disturbance. If vertue cannot shine but by resisting contrarie appetites, shall we then say, it cannot passe without the assistance of vice, and oweth him this, that by his meanes it attaineth to honour and credit? What should also betide of that glorious and generous Epicurian voluptuousnesse, that makes accompt, effeminately to pamper vertue in her lap, and there wantonly to entertaine it, allowing it for her recreation, shame-reproch, agues, povertie, death, and tortures? If I presuppose, that perfect vertue is knowne by combating sorrow, and patiently under-going paine, by tolerating the fits and agonies of the gout, without stirring out of his place; if for a necessarie object, I appoint her sharpnesse and difficultie; what shall

## THE SECOND BOOKE

become of that vertue, which hath attained so high a degree, as it doth not onely despise all manner of paine, but rather rejoyceth at-it, and when a strong fit of the collike shall assaile-it, to cause it selfe to be tickled; as that is which the Epicurians have established, and whereof divers amongst them have by their actions left most certaine proofes unto us? As also others have, whom in effect I finde to have exceeded the verie rules of their discipline; witnesse *Cato* the yonger; when I see him die, tearing and mangling his entrails; I cannot simply content my selfe to beleewe, that at that time, he had his soule wholly exempted from all trouble, or free from vexation: I cannot imagine, he did onely maintaine himselfe in this march or course, which the rules of the Stoike sect had ordained unto him, settled, without some alteration or motion, and impassibilitie. There was, in my conceit, in this mans vertue overmuch cheerefulnesse, and youthfulnessse to stay there. I verily beleewe, he felt a kind of pleasure and sensualitie in so noble an action, and that therein he more pleased himselfe, than in any other, he ever performed in his life. *Sic abiit è vita, ut causam moriendi nactum se esse gauderet* (*Cic. Tusc. Qu. i.*). So departed he his life, that he rejoyced to have found an occasion of death. I doe so constantly beleewe-it, that I make a doubt, whether he would have had the occasion of so noble an exploit taken from him. And if the goodnesse which induced him to embrace publike commodities more than his owne, did not bridle me, I should easily fall into this opinion, that he thought himselfe greatly beholding unto fortune, to have put his vertue unto so noble a triall, and to have favoured that robber, to tread the ancient libertie of his Countrie under foot. In which action me thinks I read a kinde of unspeakable joy in his minde, and a motion of extraordinarie pleasure, joyned to a manlike voluptuousnesse, at

CHAPTE

XI

Of Crueltie



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER XI which time it beheld the worthinesse, and considered  
the generositie and haughtinesse of his enterprise,

Of Crueltie

*Deliberata morte ferocior.*

—Hon. i. *Od.* xxxvii. 29. Cleopatra.

Then most in fiercenesse did he passe  
When he of death resolved was.

not urged or set-on by any hope of glorie, as the popular and effeminate judgements have judged: For, that consideration is over base, to touch so generous, so haughtie, and so constant a heart; but for the beautie of the thing it selfe in it selfe, which he, who managed all the springs, and directed all the wards thereof, saw much more clearer, and in it's perfection, than we can doe. Philosophie hath done me a pleasure to judge, that so honorable an action, had been undecently placed in any other life, than in *Catoes*, and that onely unto his it appertained to make such an end. Therefore did he with reason perswade both his sonne, and the Senators that accompanied him, to provide otherwise for themselves. *Catoni quum incredibilem natura tribuisset gravitatem, eamque ipse perpetua constantia robora-visset, semperque in proposito consilio permansisset: moriendum potius quam tyranni vultus aspiciendus erat.* Whereas nature had affoorded Cato an incredible gravitie, and he had strengthened it by continuall constancie, and ever had stood firme in his purposed desseignes, rather to die than behold the Tyrants face. Each death should be such as the life hath been. By dying we become no other than we were. I ever interpret a mans death by his life. And if a man shall tell me of any one undanted in apparance, joyned unto a weake life; I imagine it to proceed of some weake cause, and sutable to his life. The ease therefore of his death, and the facilitie he



## THE SECOND BOOKE

had acquired by the vigor of his minde, shall we say, it ought to abate something of the lustre of his vertue? And which of those, that have their spirits touched, be it never so little, with the true tincture of Philosophie, can content himselfe to imagine *Socrates*, onely, free from feare and passion, in the accident of his imprisonment, of his fetters, and of his condemnation? And who doth not perceive in him, not onely constancie and resolution (which were ever his ordinarie qualities) but also a kinde of I wot not what new contentment, and carelesse rejoycing in his last behaviour, and discourses? By the startling at the pleasure, which he feeleth in clawing of his legges, after his fetters were taken-off; doth he not manifestly declare an equall glee and joy in his soule, for being rid of his former incommodities, and entring into the knowledge of things to come? *Cato* shall pardon me (if he please) his death is more tragically, and further extended, whereas this in a certaine manner is more faire and glorious. *Aristippus* answered those, that bewailed the same; when I die, I pray the Gods send me such a death. A man shall plainly perceive in the minds of these two men, and of such as imitate them (for I make a question whether ever they could be matched) so perfect an habitude unto vertue, that it was even converted into their complexion. It is no longer a painfull vertue, nor by the ordinances of reason, for the maintaining of which, their minde must be strengthened: It is the verie essence of their soule; it is her naturall and ordinarie habit. They have made it such, by a long exercise and observing the rules and precepts of Philosophie, having lighted upon a faire and rich nature. Those vicious passions, which breed in us, finde no entrance in them. The vigor and constancie of their soules, doth suppress and extinguish all manner of concupiscences, so soone as they but begin

CHAPTER

XI

Of Crueltie

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XI

Of Crueltie

to move. Now that it be not more glorious, by an undaunted and divine resolution, to hinder the growth of temptations, and for a man to frame himselfe to vertue, so that the verie seeds of vice be cleane rooted out; than by mayne force to hinder their progresse; and having suffred himselfe to be surprised by the first assaults of passions, to arme and bandie himselfe, to stay their course and to suppress them: And that this second effect be not also much fairer, than to be simply stored with a facile and gentle nature, and of it selfe distasted and in dislike with licentiousnesse and vice, I am perswaded there is no doubt. For, this third and last manner, seemeth in some sort, to make a man innocent, but not vertuous, free from doing ill, but not sufficiently apt to doe well. Seeing this condition is so neere unto imperfection and weaknesse, that I know not well how to cleare their confines and distinctions. The verie names of Goodnesse and innocentie, are for this respect in some sort names of contempt. I see that many vertues, as chastitie, sobrietie, and temperance, may come unto us by meanes of corporall defects and imbecilitie. Constancie in dangers (if it may be termed constancie) contempt of death, paciencie in misfortunes, may happen, and are often seen in men, for want of Good judgement in such accidents, and that they are not apprehended for such as they are indeed. *Lacke of apprehension and stupiditie, doe sometimes counterfeite vertuous effects.* As I have often seen come to passe, that some men are commended, for things they rather deserve to be blamed. An Italian gentleman did once hold this position in my presence, to the prejudice and disadvantage of his nation; That the subtiltie of the Italians, and the vivacitie of their conceptions was so great, that they foresaw such dangers and accidents as might betide them so far-off, that it was not to be deemed strange, if in times of



## THE SECOND BOOKE

warre, they were often scene to provide for their safetie, yea, before they had perceived the danger: That we and the Spaniards, who were not so warie and subtile, went further; and that before we could be frighted with any perill, we must be induced to see it with our eyes, and feel it with our hands, and that even then we had no more hold: But that the Germanes and Switzers, more shallow and leaden-headed, had scarce the sense and wit to re-advise themselves, at what time they were even overwhelmed with miserie, and the axe readie to fall on their heads. It was peradventure but in jest, that he spake-it, yet is it most true, that in the art of warfare, new trained Souldiers, and such as are but novices in the trade, doe often headlong, and hand over head cast themselves into dangers, with more inconsideration, than afterward when they have scene and endured the first shooke, and are better trained in the schoole of perils.

CHAPTER

XI

Of Crueltie

*—haud ignarus, quantum nova gloria in armis,  
Et prædulce decus primo certamine possit.*

Not ignorant, how much in armes new praise,  
And sweetest honour, in first conflict weighes.

Lo here the reason why when we judge of a particular action, we must first consider many circumstances, and throughly observe the man, that hath produced the same before we name and censure it. But to speake a word of my selfe: I have sometimes noted my friends to terme that wisdom in me, which was but meere fortune; and to deeme that advantage of courage and patience, that was advantage of judgement and opinion: and to attribute one title for another unto me, sometimes to my profit, and now and then to my losse. As for the rest, I am so far from attaining unto that chiefe and most perfect degree of excellencie, where a habitude is



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

**CHAPTER** made of vertue, that even of the second, I have made  
XI no great triall. I have not greatly strived to bridle  
**Of Crueltie** the desires, wherewith I have found my selfe urged  
and pressed. My vertue, is a vertue, or to say better  
innocencie, accidentall and casuall. Had I been  
borne with a lesse regular complexion, I imagine  
my state had been verie pittifull, and it would have  
gon hard with me: for, I could never perceive any  
great constancie in my soule, to resist and undergoe  
passions, had they been any thing violent. I cannot  
foster quarels, or endure co[n]tentions in my house.  
So am I not greatly beholding unto my selfe, in that  
I am exempted from many vices:

—*si vitii mediocribus, et mea paucis*  
*Mendosa est natura, alioqui recta velut si*  
*Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore nœvos.*  
—Hor. i. Sat. vi. 65.

If in a few more fault's my nature faile,  
Right otherwise: as if that you would raile  
On prettie moles well placed,  
On bodie seemely graced.

I am more endebedted to my fortune, than to my  
reason for it: Shee hath made me to be borne of a  
race famous for integritie and honestie, and of a verie  
good father. I wot not well whether any part of  
his humours have descended into me, or whether  
the domestike examples, and good institution of my  
infancie have insensibly set their helping hand unto  
it; or whether I were otherwise so borne:

*Seu Libra, seu me Scorpius aspicit*  
*Formidolosus, pars violentior*  
*Natalis horæ, seu tyrannus*  
*Hesperie Capricornus undæ.*—Hor. ii. Od. xvii. 17.

Whether the chiefe part of my birth-houre were  
Ascendent *Libra*, or *Scorpius* full of feare,  
Or in my *Horoscope* were *Capricorne*,  
Whose tyrannie neere western Seas is borne.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

But so it is, that naturally of my selfe, I abhorre and detest all manner of vices. The answer of *Antisthenes* to one, that demanded of him, which was the best thing to be learned: *To unlearne evill*, seemed to be fixed on this image, or to have an ayme at this. I abhorre them (I say) with so naturall, and so innated an opinion, that the very same instinct and impression, which I suckt from my nurse, I have so kept, that no occasions could ever make me alter the same: No, not mine owne discourses, which because they have been somewhat lavish in noting or taxing something of the common course, could easily induce me to some actions, which this my natural inclination makes me to hate. I will tell you a wonder, I will tell it you indeed: I thereby find in many things, more stay and order in my manners, than in my opinion: and my concupiscence lesse debauched, than my reason. *Aristippus* established certaine opinions so bold, in favour of voluptuousnesse and riches, that he made all Philosophie to mutinie against him. But concerning his manners, *Dionysius* the tyrant, having presented him with three faire young Wenches, that he might chuse the fairest; he answered he would chuse them all three, and that *Paris* had verie ill successe, forsomuch as he had preferred one above her fellowes. But they being brought to his owne house, he sent them backe againe, without tasting them. His servant one day carrying store of money after him, and being so overcharged with the weight of it, that he complained, his Master commanded him, to cast so much therof away, as troubled him. And *Epicurus*, whose positions are irreligious and delicate, demeaned himselfe in his life verie laboriously, and devoutly. He wrote to a friend of his, that he lived but with browne bread and water, and entreated him to send him a piece of cheese, against the time he was to make a

CHAPTER  
XI

Of Crueltie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XI  
Of Crueltie

solemne feast. May it be true, that to be perfectly good, we must be so by an hidden, naturall, and universall proprietie, without law, reason, and example? The disorders and excesses, wherein I have found my selfe engaged, are not (God be thanked) of the worst. I have rejected and condemned them in my selfe, according to their worth; for, my judgement was never found to be infected by them. And on the other side, I accuse them more rigorously in my selfe, than in another. But that is all: as for the rest, I applie but little resistance unto them, and suffer my selfe over-easily to encline to the other side of the Ballance, except it be to order and empeach them from being commixt with others, which (if a man take not good heed unto himselfe) for the most part entertaine and enterchaine themselves the one with the other. As for mine, I have as much as it hath laine in my power, abridged them, and kept them as single, and as alone as I could:

—*nec ultra*  
*Errorem foveo.*—Juv. *Sat.* viii. 164.

Nor doe I cherish any more,  
The error which I bred before.

For, as touching the Stoikes opinion, who say, that when the wise man worketh, he worketh with all his vertues together; howbeit, according to the nature of the action, there be one more apparant than other (to which purpose the similitude of mans bodie might, in some sort, serve their turne; for, the action of choler cannot exercise it selfe, except all the humours set-to their helping-hand, although choler be prædominant) if thence they will draw alike consequence, that when the offender trespasseth, he doth it with all the vices together. I doe not so easily beleeeve them, or else I understand them not; for, in effect, I feel the contrarie. They are sharpe-wittie



## THE SECOND BOOKE

subtillties, and without substance, about which Philosophie doth often busie it selfe. Some vices I shun; but othersome I eschew as much as any Saint can doe. The Peripatetikes doe also disavow this conexitie, and indissoluble knitting together. And Aristotle is of opinion, *That a wise and just man may be both intemperate and incontinent.* Socrates avowed unto them, who in his Phisiognomie perceived some inclination unto vice, that indeed it was his naturall propension, but that by discipline he had corrected the same. And the familiar friends of the Philosopher *Stilpo* were wont to say, that being borne subject unto wine and women, he had, by studie, brought himselfe to abstaine from both. On the otherside, what good I have, I have it by the lot of my birth: I have it neither by law nor prescription, nor by any apprenticeship. The innocencie that is in me, is a kinde of simple-plaine innocencie, without vigor or art. Amongst all other vices, there is none I hate more, than crueltie, both by nature and judgement, as the extremest of all vices. But it is with such an yearning and faint-heartednesse, that if I see but a chickens necke puld off, or a pigge stickt, I cannot chuce but grieve, and I cannot well endure a seelie dew-bedabled hare to groane, when she is seized upon by the houndes; although hunting be a violent sport. Those that are to withstand voluptuousnesse, doe willingly use this argument, to shew, it is altogether vicious and unreasonable: That where she is in her greatest prime and chiefe strength, she doth so over-sway us, that reason can have no accesse unto us, and for a further triall, alleage the experience wee feel and have of it, in our acquaintance or copulation with women.

CHAPTER  
XI

Of Crueltie

GENTLE

—*cum iam prætagit gaudia corpus*  
*Atque in eo est Venus, ut muliebria conserat arca.*—Lucr. iv. 1097.

When now the bodie doth light-joyes fore-know,  
And Venus set the womans fields to sow.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

IR Where they thinke pleasure doth so far transport us beyond our selves, that our Discourse, then altogether overwhelmed, and our reason wholie ravished in the gulfes of sensualitie, cannot by any meanes discharge her function. I know it may be otherwise: And if a man but please, he may sometimes, even upon the verie instant, cast his mind on other conceits. But she must be strained to a higher key, and heedfully pursued: I know a man may gourmandize the earnest and thought-confounding violence of that pleasure: for I may with some experience speake of it; and I have not found *Venus* to be so imperious a Goddess, as many, and more reformed than my selfe witnesse her to be, I thinke it not a wonder, as doth the Queene of *Navarre*, in one of the *Tales* of her *Heptameron* (which respecting the subject it treateth of, is a verie prettie booke) nor doe I deeme it a matter of extreame difficultie, for a man to weare-out a whole night, in all opportunitie and libertie, in companie of a faire Mistresse, long time before sued-unto, and by him desired; religiously keeping his word, if he have engaged himselfe, to be contented with simple kisses and plaine touching. I am of opinion, that the example of the sport in hunting would more fit the same: wherein as there is lesse pleasure, so there is more distraction and surprising, whereby our reason being amazed, looseth the leasure to prepare her selfe against it: when as after a long questing and beating for some game, the beast doth suddainly start, or rowze up before us, and haply in such a place, where we least expected the same. That suddaine motion, and riding, and the earnestnesse of showting, jubeting and hallowing, still ringing in our eares, would make it verie hard for those, who love that kind of close or chamber-hunting, at that verie instant, to withdraw their thoughts else-where. And Poets make *Diana* victoriously

## THE SECOND BOOKE

to triumph both over the firebrand and arrowes CHAPTE  
of *Cupid*. XI

*Quis non malarum quas amor curas habet  
Hæc inter oblitiscitur ?—Hor. Epod. ii. 37.*

Of Crueltie

While this is doing, who doth not forget  
The wicked cares wherewith Loves heart doth fret ?

But to returne to my former discourse, I have a verie feeling and tender compassion of other mens afflictions, and should more easily weep for companie sake, if possible for any occasion whatsoever, I could shed teares. There is nothing sooner moveth teares in me, than to see others weepe, not onely fainedly, but howsoever, whether truly or forcedly. I do not greatly waile for the dead, but rather envie them. Yet doe I much waile and moane the dying. The Canibales and savage people do not so much offend me with roasting and eating of dead bodies, as those which torment and persecute the living. Let any man be executed by law, how deservedly soever, I cannot endure to behold the execution with an unrelenting eye. Some one going about to witnesse the clemencie of *Julius Cesar* : He was (saith he) tractable and milde in matters of revenge. Having compelled the Pirates to yeeld themselves unto him, who had before taken him prisoner, and put him to ransom, forasmuch as he had threatned to have them all crucified, he condemned them to that kind of death, but it was after he had caused them to be strangled. *Philomon* his secretaire, who would have paysoned him, had no sharper punishment of him, than an ordinarie death. Without mentioning the Laten Author, who for a testimonie of clemencie both to alleage, the onely killing of those, by whom a man hath been offended, it may easily be glessed, that he is tainted with vile and horrible examples of crueltie, such as Romane Tyrants



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### XI

### Of Crueltie

brought into fashion. As for me, even in matters of justice, *Whatsoever is beyond a simple death, I deeme it to be meere crueltie*: And especially amongst us, who ought to have a regardfull respect, that their soules should be sent to heaven, which cannot be, having first by intolerable tortures agitated, and as it were brought them to dispaire. A Souldier, not long since, being a prisoner, and perceiving from a loft a Tower, where he was kept, that store of people flocked together on a greene, and Carpenters were busie at worke to erect a skaffold, supposing the same to be for him, as one desperat, resolved to kill himselfe, and searching up and downe for some thing to make himselfe away, found nothing but an old rustie cart-naile, which fortune presented him with; he tooke it, and therewithall, with all the strength he had, strooke and wounded himselfe twice in the throat, but seeing it would not rid him of life, he then thrust it into his bellie up to the head, where he left it fast-sticking. Shortly after, one of his keepers comming-in unto him, and yet living, finding him in that miserable plight, but weltring in his goare-blood, and readie to gaspe his last, told the Magistrates of it, which, to prevent time before he should die, hastned to pronounce sentence against him: which when he heard, and that he was onely condemned to have his head cut-off, he seemed to take heart of grace againe, and to be sorie for what he had done, and tooke some comfortable drinks, which before he had refused, greatly thanking the Judges for his unhoped gentle condemnation: And told them, that for feare of a more sharply-cruell, and intolerable death by law, he had resolved to prevent-it by some violent manner of death, having by the preparations he had seen the Carpenters make, and by gathering of people together, conceived an opinion, that they would torture him with some

## THE SECOND BOOKE

horrible torment, and seemed to be delivered from death onely by the change of it. Were I worthie to give counsell, I would have these examples of rigor, by which superior powers goe about to keep the common people in awe, to be onely exercised on the bodies of criminall malefactors: For, to see them deprived of christian buriall, to see them haled, dis-bowelled, parboyled, and quartered, might haply touch the common sort as much, as the paines, they make the living to endure: howbeit in effect it be little or nothing, as saith God, *Qui corpus occidunt, et postea non habent quod faciant* (LUKE xii. 4): *Those that kill the bodie, but have afterwards no more to doe.* And Poets make the horror of this picture greatly to prevaile, yea, and above death.

CHAPTER  
XI  
Of Crueltie

*Hæc reliquias semivivæ Regis, denudatis ossibus,  
Per terram sævæ delibutas fæde divexarier.*

—CIC. *Tusc. Qu. I.*

O that the reliques of an halfe-burn't King, bones bared,  
On earth besmeare'd with filth, should be so foully marred.

It was my fortune to be at *Rome*, upon a day that one *Catena*, a notorious high-way theefe, was executed: at his strangling no man of the companie seemed to be mooved to any ruth; but when he came to be quartered, the Executioner gave no blow that was not accompanied with a piteous voyce, and hartie exclamation, as if every man had had a feeling sympathie, or lent his senses to the poore mangled wretch. Such inhumane outrages and barbarous excesses should be exercised against the rinde, and not practised against the quicke. In a case somewhat like unto this, did *Artaxerxes* asswage and mitigate the sharpnesse of the ancient lawes of *Persia*, appointing that the Lords, which had trespassed in their estate, whereas they were wont to be whipped, they should be stripped naked, and their clothes



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### XI

### Of Crueltie

whipped for them: and where they were accustomed to have their haire pulled-off, they should onely have their hat taken off. The Ægyptians so devout and religious, thought they did sufficiently satisfie divine Justice, in sacrificing painted and counterfeit hogges unto it: An over-hardy invention, to go about with pictures and shadowes to appease God, a substance so essentiall and divine. I live in an age, wherein we abound with incredible examples of this vice, through the licentiousnesse of our civill and intestine warres: And read all ancient stories, be they never so tragicall, you shall find none to equal those, we daily see practised. But that hath nothing made me acquainted with it. I could hardly be perswaded, before I had seene it, that the world could have afforded so marble-hearted and savage-minded men, that for the onely pleasure of murther would commit-it; then cut, mangle, and hacke other members in pieces: to rouze and sharpen their wits, to invent unused tortures and unheard-of torments; to devise new and unknowne deaths and that in cold blood, without any former enmitie or quarrell, or without any gaine or profit; and onely to this end, that they may enjoy the pleasing spectacle of the languishing gestures, pitifull motions, horror-moving yellings, deep fetcht groanes, and lamentable voyces of a dying and drooping man. For, that is the extremest point whereunto the crueltie of man may attaine. *Ut homo hominem, non iratus, non timens, tantum spectaturus occidat* (SEN. Clem. ii. c. 4). *That one man should kill another, neither being angrie, nor afeard, but onely to looke on.* As for me, I could never so much as endure, without remorse and grieve, to see a poore, sillie, and innocent beast pursued and killed, which is harmelesse and void of defence, and of whom we receive no offence at all. And as it commonly hapneth, that when the Stag begins to be



## THE SECOND BOOKE

embost, and finds his strength to faile-him, having no other remedie left him, doth yeeld and bequeath himselfe unto us that pursue him, with teares suing to us for mercie,

CHAPTER

XI

Of Crueltie

—*questūque cruentus*

*Atque imploranti similis :*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vii. 521.

With blood from throat, and teares from eyes,  
It seemes that he for pittie cries.

was ever a grievous spectacle unto me. I seldom take any beast alive, but I give him his libertie. *Pythagoras* was wont to buy fishes of fishers, and birds of fowlers to set them free againe.

—*primūque à cæde ferarum*

*Incaluisse puto maculatum sanguine ferrum.*

—OVID, *Métam.* xv. 106.

And first our blades in blood embrude I deeme  
With slaughter of poore beasts did reeking steeme.

*Such as by nature shew themselves bloodie-minded towards harmlesse beasts, witnesse a naturall propension unto crueltie.* After the ancient Romanes had once enured themselves without horror to behold the slaughter of wild beasts in their shewes, they came to the murther of men and Gladiators. Nature (I feare me) hath of her owne selfe added unto man a certaine instinct to humanitie. No man taketh delight to see wild beasts sport and wantonly to make much one of another: Yet all are pleased to see them tuggle, mangle, and enterteare one another. And lest any bodie should jeast at this simphathie, which I have with them, Divinitie it selfe willeth us to shew them some favour: And considering, that one selfe-same master (I meane that incomprehensible worlds framer) hath placed all creatures in this his wondrous palace for his service, and that they, as well as we, are of his houshold: I say, it hath some

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER XI reason to injoyne us, to shew some respect and affection towards them. *Pythagoras* borrowed *Metempsychosis* of the *Ægyptians*, but since, it hath been received of divers Nations, and especially of our *Druides*:

*Morte carent animæ, semperque priore relictâ  
Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitâmq; receptæ.*

—158.

Our death-lesse soules, their former seats refrained,  
In harbors new live and lodge entertained.

The Religion of our ancient Gaules, inferred, that soules being eternall, ceased not to remove and change place, from one bodie to another: to which fantasie was also entermixed some consideration of divine justice. For, according to the soules behaviors, during the time she had been with *Alexander*, they sayd, that God appointed it another bodie to dwell in, either more or lesse painfull, and sutable to her condition.

—*muta ferarum*  
*Cogit vincla pati, truculentos ingerit ursis,  
Prædonésque lupis, fallaces vulpibus addit.  
Atque ubi per varios annos per mille figuras  
Egit letheo purgatos flumine tandem  
Rursus ad humanæ revocat primordia formæ.*

—CLAUD. in *Ruff.* i. 482, 491.

Dumbe bands of beasts he makes mens soules endure,  
Blood-thirstie soules he doth to Beares enure,  
Craftie to Foxes, to Woolves bent to rapes;  
Thus when for many yeares, through many shapes,  
He hath them driv'd in *Lethe* lake at last,  
Them purg'd he turn's to mans forme whence they past.

If the soule had been valiant, they placed it in the bodie of a Lion; if voluptuous, in a Swine; if faint-harted, in a Stagge, or a Hare: if malicious in a Foxe, and so of the rest, untill that being purified by this punishment, it reassumed and tooke the bodie of some other man againe.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Ipsæ ego, nam meminî, Troiani tempore belli  
Panthoides Euphorbus eram.*—OVID, *Metam.* xv. 160.

When Troy was won, I, as I call to mind,  
Euphorbus was, and Panthus sonne by kind.

CHAPTER  
XI  
Of Crueltie

As touching that alliance betweene us and beasts, I make no great accompt of it, nor do I greatly admit it; neither of that which divers Nations, and namely of the most ancient and noble, who have not onely received beasts into their societie and companie, but allowed them a place farre above themselves; sometimes deeming them to be familiars and favored of their Gods, and holding them in a certaine awfull respect and reverence more than humane, and others acknowledging no other God nor no other Divinity than they. *Beluæ à barbaris propter beneficium consecratae* (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* i.). *Beasts by the Barbarians were made sacred for some benefit.*

—*crocodilon adorat*  
*Pars hæc, illa paret saturam serpentibus Ibin,*  
*Effigies sacri hic nitet aurea Cercopitheci.*

—JUVEN. *Sat.* xv. 2.

This Country doth the Crocodile adore,  
That feares the Storke glutted with Serpents gore,  
The sacred Babion here,  
In gold shape doth appeare.

—*hic pisces fluminis, illic*  
*Oppida tota canem venerantur.*—7.

A fish here whole Townes reverence most,  
A dog they honour in that coast.

And the very same interpretation that *Plutarke* giveth unto this error, which is very well taken, is also honourable for them. For, he saith, that (for example sake) it was neither the Cat nor the Oxe that the Egyptians adored, but that in those beasts, they worshipped some image of divine faculties. In this patience and utility, and in that, vivacity, or (as



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### XI

### Of Crueltie

our neighbours the Borgonians with all *Germany*) the impatience to see themselves shut up: Whereby they represented the liberty which they loved and adored beyond all other divine faculty, and so of others. But when amongst the most moderate opinions, I meet with some discourses that goe about and labour to shew the neere resemblance betweene us and beasts, and what share they have in our greatest Privileges, and with how much likely-hood they are compared unto us, truly I abate much of our presumption, and am easily removed from that imaginary soveraigntie that some give and ascribe unto us above all other creatures. If all that were to be contradicted, yet is there a kinde of respect, and a generall duty of humanity, which tieth us not only unto brute beasts that have life and sense, but even unto trees and plants. *Unto men we owe Justice, and to all other creatures that are capable of it, grace and benignity.* There is a kinde of enter-changeable commerce and mutuall bond betweene them and us. I am not ashamed nor afraid to declare the tendernesse of my childish Nature, which is such, that I cannot well reject my Dog, if he chance (although out of season) to fawne upon me, or beg of me to play with him. The Turkes have almes, and certaine Hospitals appointed for brute beasts. The Romans had a publike care to breed and nourish Geese, by whose vigilancy their Capitoll had been saved. The Athenians did precisely ordaine that all manner of Mules which had served or beene imployed about the building of their Temple called *Hecatompodon* should bee free, and suffered to feed wheresover they pleased, without any let or impeachment. The Agrigentines had an ordinary custome, seriously and solemnly to bury all such beasts as they had held deare; as horses of rare worth and merit, speciall dogs, choice or profitable birds, or

## THE SECOND BOOKE

such as had but served to make their children sport. And the sumptuous magnificence which in all other things was ordinary and peculiar unto them, appeared also almost notably in the stately sumptuousnesse and costly number of monuments erected to that end, which many ages after have endured and been maintained in pride and state. The Egyptians were wont to bury their Wolves, their Dogs, their Cats, their Beares, and Crocodiles in holy places, embalming their carcasses, and at their deaths to weare mourning weeds for them. *Cymon* caused a stately honourable tombe to be erected for the Mares, where-with he had three times gained the prize at running in the Olimpike games. Ancient *Xantippus* caused his Dog to be enterred upon a hill by the Sea shore, which ever since hath beene named by him. And *Plutarch* (as himselfe saith) made it a matter of conscience, in hope of a small gaine, to sell or send an Oxe to the shambles that had served him a long time.

CHAPTER  
XI

Of Crueltie

### THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

*An Apologic of Raymond Sebond*

**K**NOWLEDGE is without all contradiction, a most profitable and chiefe ornament; Those who despise it declare evidently their sottishnesse; Yet doe not I value it at so excessive a rate as some have done; namely, *Herillus* the Philosopher, who grounded his chiefe felicity upon it, and held that it lay in her power to make us content and wise: which I cannot beleeve, nor that which others have said, that *Knowledge is the mother of all vertue*, and that *vice proceedeth of ignorance*. Which if it be, it is subject to

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS

### CHAPTER XI

#### Of Crueltie

our neighbours the Borgonians with the impatience to see themselves shew they represented the liberty which adored beyond all other divine others. But when amongst opinions, I meet with some disand labour to shew the neere us and beasts, and what s greatest Privileges, and wit they are compared unto our presumption, and an imaginary soveraigntie unto us above all othe to be contradicted, y and a generall duty only unto brute b even unto trees *Justice, and to a it, grace and b changeable co them and u declare the is such, th chance (al or beg almes, beasts. and no had that im The many places to shake the four believ. Wherein he seemed as he who by discourse of re the budding disease would easil the Atheisme: For the vulgar*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

faculty to judge of things by themselves, suffering  
it selfe to be carried away by fortune, and led on by  
outward apparances, if once it be possessed with the  
boldnesse to despise, and malapertnesse to impugne  
the opinions which tofore it held in awfull reverence  
(as are those wherein consisteth their salvation) and  
that some articles of their religion be made doubtfull  
and questionable, they will soone and easily admit  
an equall uncertainty in all other parts of their  
beleefe, as they that had no other grounded autho-  
ritie or foundation, but such as are now shaken and  
weakened, and immediatly reject (as a tyrannicall  
yoke) all impressions they had in former times re-  
ceived by the authoritie of Lawes, or reverence of  
ancient custome.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum,*

—LUCR. v. 1150.

That which we fear'd before too much,  
We gladly scorne when tis not such.

Undertaking thence forward to allow of nothing,  
except they have first given their voice and parti-  
cular consent to the same. My father, a few daies  
before his death, lighting by chance upon this booke,  
which before he had neglected, amongst other writ-  
ings commanded mee to translate the same into  
French. It is easie to translate such Authors, where  
nothing but the matter is to be represented; but  
hard and dangerous to undertake such as have added  
much to the grace and elegancy of the language,  
namely to reduce them into a weaker and poorer  
tongue. It was a strange taske, and new occupation  
for me: but by fortune being then at leisure, and  
unable to gainsay the commandement of the best  
father that ever was; I came ere long (as well as I  
could) to an end of it: wherein he tooke singular  
delight, and commanded the same to be printed,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

which accordingly was after his decease performed. I found the conceits of the author to be excellent, the contexture of his worke well followed, and his project full of pietie. Now forasmuch as divers amuse themselves to reade it, and especially Ladies, to whom we owe most service, it hath often beene my hap to help them, when they were reading it, to discharge the booke of two principall objections, which are brought against the same. His drift is bold, and his scope adventurous; for he undertaketh by humane and naturall reasons, to establish and verifie all the articles of Christian religion against Atheists. Wherein (to say truth) I find him so resolute and so happy, as I deeme it a thing impossible to doe better in that argument, and thinke that none equalleth him. Which booke seeming to me both over-rich and exquisite, being written by an author, whose name is so little knowne, and of whom, all we know, is, that he was a Spaniard, who about two hundred yeeres since professed Physicke in *Tholouse*: I demanded once of *Adrianus Turnebus* (a man who knew all things) what such a booke might be, who answered, that he deemed the same to be some Quintessence extracted from out Saint *Thomas Aquinas*: For, in good truth, onely such a spirit fraught with so infinite erudition, and so full of admirable subtilitie, was capable of such and so rare imaginations. So it is, that whosoever be the author or deviser of it (the title whereof ought not without further reason to be taken from *Sebond*) he was a very sufficient-worthie man, and endowed with sundry other excellent qualities. The first thing he is reprov'd for in his Booke, is, that *Christians wrong themselves much, in that they ground their beleefe upon humane reasons, which is conceived but by faith, and by a particular inspiration of God.* Which objection



## THE SECOND BOOKE

seemeth to containe some zeale of pietie; by reason whereof we ought with so much more mildnes and regard, endeavour to satisfie them that propose it. It were a charge, more befitting a man conversant, and sutable to one acquainted with the holy Scriptures, than me, who am altogether ignorant in them. Neverthelesse I thinke, that even as to a matter so divine and high and so much exceeding al humane understanding, as is this Verity, wherwith it hath pleased the goodnesse of God to enlighten us, it is most requisit, that he affoord and lend us his helpe: And that, with an extraordinary and privileged favour, that so we may the better conceive and entertaine the same: For, I suppose that meanes meerely humane can no way be capable of it; which if they were, so many rare and excellent mindes, and so plenteously stored with naturall faculties, as have beene in times past, would never by their discourse, have mist the attayning of this knowledge. *It is faith onely, which lively and assuredly embraceth the high mysteries of our Religion.* And no man can doubt, but that it is a most excellent and commendable enterprise, properly to accommodate and fit to the service of our faith, the natural helpes and humane implements which God hath bestowed upon us. And no question is to be made, but that it is the most honourable employment we can put them unto; and that there is no occupation or intent more worthy a good Christian, than by all meanes, studies and imaginations, carefully to endeavour, how to embellish, amplifie and extend the truth of his beleefe and religion. *It is not enough for us to serve God in spirit and soule, we owe him besides, and wee yeeld unto him a corporall worshipping; we applie our limbs, our motions, and all externall things, to honour him.* The like ought to be done, and we should accompany our faith with all the

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

reason we possesse: Yet alwayes with this proviso, that we thinke it doth not depend of us, and that all our strength and arguments can never attaine to so supernaturall and divine a knowledge: Except it seize upon us, and as it were enter into us by an extraordinarie infusion: And unlesse it also enter into us, not onely by discourse, but also by humane meanes, she is not in her dignitie, nor in her glorie. And verily I feare therefore, that except this way, we should not enjoy it. Had we fast-hold on God, by the interposition of a lively faith; had we hold-fast on God by himselfe, and not by us; had we a divine foundation, then should not humane and worldly occasions have the power so to shake and totter us, as they have. Our hold would not then yeeld to so weake a batterie: The love of noveltie; the constraint of Princes; the good successe of one partie; the rash and casuall changing of our opinions, should not then have the power to shake and alter our beleefe. We should not suffer the same to be troubled at the wil and pleasure of a new argument, and at the perswasion, no, not of all the rhetorike that ever was: we should withstand these boistrous billowes with an inflexible and unmoveable constancie:

*Illisos fluctus rupes, ut vasta refundit,  
Et varias circum latrantes dissipat undas,  
—Mole sua,—*VING. *Æn.* vii. 587.

As huge rocks doe regorge th' invective waves,  
And dissipate the billowes brawling braves,  
Which these gainst those still bellow out,  
Those being big and standing stout.

If this raie of Divinitie did in any sort touch us, it would everie where appeare: Not only our words, but our actions, would beare some shew and lustre of it. Whatsoever should proceed from us, might be seene inlightned with this noble and matchlesse

## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XII.

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

brightnes. We should blush for shame, that in humane sects, there was never any so factious, what difficultie or strangenesse soever his doctrine maintained, but would in some sort conforme his behaviors and square his life unto it: Whereas so divine and heavenly an institution never markes christians but by the tongue. And will you see whether it be so? Compare but our manners unto a Turke, or a Pagan, and we must needs yeeld unto them: Whereas in respect of our religions superiortie, we ought by much, yea by an incomparable distance, out-shine them in excellencie: And well might a man say, *Are they so just, so charitable, and so good? Then must they be Christians.* All other outward shewes and exterior apparences are common to all religions: As hope, affiance, events, ceremonies, penitence and martyrdome. *The peculiar badge of our truth should be vertue;* As it is the heavenliest and most difficult marke, and worthiest production of Verity it self. And therefore was our good Saint *Lewis* in the right, when that Tartarian King, who was become a Christian, intended to come to *Lions*, to kisse the Popes feet, and there to view the sanctitie he hoped to find in our lives and manners, instantly to divert him from it, fearing lest our dissolute manners, and licentious kind of life, might scandalize him, and so alter his opinion fore-conceived of so sacred a religion. Howbeit the contrary happened to another, who for the same effect being come to *Rome*, and there viewing the disolutenesse of the Prelates and people of those dayes, was so much the more confirmed in our religion; considering with himselfe what force and divinity it must of consequence have, since it was able, amidst so many corruptions and so viciously-polluted hands, to maintaine her dignitie and splendor. *Had we but one onely graine of faith, wee should then*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*be able to remove mountaines from out their place, saith the holy Writ. Our actions being guided, and accompanied with divinitie, should not then be meerely humane, but even as our beliefe, containe some wonder-causing thing. Brevis est institutio vite honestæ beatæque, si credas. The institution of an honest and blessed life is but short, if a man beleeve. Some make the world beleeve, that they beleeve things they never doe. Others (and they are the greater number) perswade themselves they doe so, as unable to conceive what it is to beleeve. We thinke it strange if in warres, which at this time doe so oppresse our state, we see the events to float so strangely, and with so common and ordinarie a manner to change and alter: The reason is, we adde nothing unto it but our owne. Justice, which is on the one side, is used but for a cloake and ornament; she is indeed alleadged, but nor received, nor harboured, nor wedded. She is as in the mouth of a Lawyer, and not as she ought in the heart and affection of the partie. God oweth his extraordinarie assistance unto faith and religion, and not to our passions. Men are but directors unto it and use religion for a shew: It ought to be cleane contrarie. Doe but marke if we doe not handle it as it were a peece of waxe, from out so right and so firme a rule, to drawe so many contrary shapes. When was this better seene than nowadaies in France? Those which have taken it on the left, and those who have taken it on the right hand; Such as speake the false, and such who speake the truth of it, do so alike employ and fit the same to their violent and ambitious enterprises, proceede unto it with so conformable a proceeding in riotousnesse and injustice, they make the diversitie they pretend in their opinions doubtfull, and hard to be beleaved, in a thing from which depends the conduct and law of our life. Can a man see from one same Schoole*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

and Discipline, more united and like customes and fashions to proceed? View but the horrible impudencie wherewith we tosse divine reasons to and fro, and how irreligiously wee have both rejected and taken them againe, according as fortune hath in these publike stormes transported us from place to place. This solemne proposition: *Whether it be lawfull for a subject, for the defence of religion, to rebell and take armes against his Prince*: Call but to minde, in what mouthes but a twelve-moneth agoe the affirmative of the same was the chiefe pillar of the one part; the negative was the maine-underprop of the other: And listen now from whence commeth the voyce and instruction of one and other: and whether armes clatter and clang lesse for this, than for that cause. And we burne those men, which say, that truth must be made to abide the yoke of our need: And how much worse doth *France*, than speake it? Let us confesse the truth: he that from out this lawfull army should cull out, first those who follow it for meere zeale of a religious affection, then such as only regard the defence and protection of their countries lawes, or service of their Prince; whether hee could ever erect a compleat company of armed men. How comes it to passe, that so few are found, who have still held one same wil and progresse in our publike revolutions, and that we see them now and then but faintly, and sometimes, as fast as they can headlong to runne into the action? And the same men, now by their violence and rashnesse, and now through their slownes, demissnes, and heavines to spoile, and as it were overthrow our affaires, but that they are thrust into them by casuall motives, and particular consideration, according to the diversities wherewith they are moved? *I plainly perceive, we lend nothing unto devotion but the offices that flatter our passions.* There is no hostilitie so excellent, as that which is absolutely

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Seboad

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Christian. Our zeale worketh wonders, when ever it secondeth our inclination toward hatred, crueltie, ambition, avarice, detraction, or rebellion. Towards goodnes, benignitie, or temperance, it goeth but slowly, and against the haire, except miraculously, some rare complexion leade him unto it, it neither runnes nor flieth to it. *Our religion was ordained to root out vices, but it shrowdeth, fostreth and provoketh them.* As commonly wee say, *We must not make a foole of God.* Did wee beleeve in him, I say not through faith, but with a simple beleefe, yea (I speake it to our confusion) did we but beleeve and know him, as wee doe another storie, or as one of our companions, we should then love him above all other things, by reason of the infinite goodnes, and unspeakable beauty that is, and shines in him: Had he but the same place in our affections, that riches, pleasures, glory and our friends have: The best of us doth not so much feare to wrong him, as he doth to injurie his neighbour, his kinsman, or his master. Is there so simple a minde, who on the one side having before him the object of one of our vicious pleasures, and on the other to his full view, perfect knowledge and assured perswasion, the state of an immortall glorie, that would enter into contention of one for the other? And if we often refuse it through meere contempt: for what draws us to blaspheming, unlesse it be at all adventures, the desire it selfe of the offence? The philosopher *Antisthenes*, when he was initiated in the mysteries of *Orpheus*, the priest, saying, unto him, that such as vowed themselves to that religion, should after death receive eternall and perfect felicities, replied, if thou beleeve it, why dost thou not die thy self? *Diogenes* more roughly (as his manner was) and further from our purpose, answered the priest, who perswaded him to be one of his order, that so he might come unto, and attaine the happinesse of the

## THE SECOND BOOKE

other world: Wilt thou have me beleeve, that those famous men *Agesilaus* and *Epaminondas*, shall be miserable, and that thou, who art but an asse, and dost nothing of any worth, shalt be happy, because thou art a Priest? Did we but receive these large promises of everlasting blessednes with like authoritie, as we do a philosophicall discourse, we should not then have death in that horror as we have:

CHAPTER  
XII  
—  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Non jam se moriens dissolvi conqueretur,  
Sed magis ire juras, vestemque relinquere ut anguis  
Gauderet prolonga senex aut cornua cervus.*—LUCR. iii. 630.

He would not now complaine to be dissolved dying,  
But rather more rejoyce, that now he is forth-flying,  
Or as a Snake his coat out-worne,  
Or as old Harts, doth cast his horne.

I will be dissolved should we say, and be with *Jesus Christ*. The forcible power of *Platoes* discourse, of the immortality of the soule, provoked divers of his Schollers unto death, that so they might more speedily enjoy the hopes he told them of. All which is a most evident token, that we receive our religion, but according to our fashion, and by our owne hands, and no otherwise than other religions are received. We are placed in the Country, where it was in use; where we regard her antiquity, or the authority of those who have maintained her; where we feare the menaces where-with she threatneth all mis-believers, or follow her promises. The considerations ought to be applied and employed to our beleeve, but as Subsidiaries: they be humane bonds. Another Country, other Testimonies, equall promises: alike menaces, might sensibly imprint a cleane contrary religion in us: we are Christians by the same title, as we are either Perigordins or Germans. And as *Plato* saith: *There are few so confirmed in Atheisme, but some great*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

or fiercenesse, strange and seld-knowne opinions, as if they would become reformers of the world, by affecting a profession onely in countenance: who though they be sufficiently foolish, yet are they not powerfull enough, to ground or settle it in their consciences. Yet will not such leave to lift-up their joyned hands to heaven, give them but a stoccado on their breast: and when feare shall have suppress, or sicknesse vanquished this licentious fervour of a wavering minde, then will they suffer themselves gently to be reclaimed, and discreetly to be perswaded, to give credit unto true beliefe and publike examples. A decree seriously digested is one thing, and these shallow and superficial impressions another, which bred by the dissolutenesse of a loose spirit, do rashly and uncertainly float up and downe the fantasie of a man. Oh men most braine-sicke and miserable, that endeavour to be worse than they can! The error of Paganisme, and the ignorance of our sacred truth, was the cause of this great soules-fall; but onely great in worldly greatnes; also in this next abuse, which is, that children and old men, are found to be more susceptible or capable of religion, as if it were bred and had her credit from our imbecillitie. *The bond which should binde our judgement, tie our will, enforce and joyne our soules to our Creator, should be a bond taking his doubling and forcex, not from our considerations, reasons and passions, but from a divine and supernaturall compulsion, having but one forme, one countenance, and one grace: which is the authoritie and grace of God.* Now our heart being ruled, and our soule commanded by faith, reason willeth, that she drawes all our other parts to the service of her intent, according to their power and facultie. Nor is it likely, but that this vast worlds-frame must beare the impression of some

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## THE SECOND BOOKE

That he may well be known, and teach by seeing,  
How he goes, how we should marke his decreeing.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Now our reason and humane discourse, is as the lumpish and barren matter; and the grace of God is the forme thereof. Tis that, which giveth both fashion and worth unto it. Even as the vertuous actions of *Socrates* and *Cato*, are but frivolous and [un]profitable, because they had not their end, and regarded not the love and obedience of the true creator of all things; and namely, because they were ignorant of the true knowledge of God: So is it of our imaginations and discourse; they have a kind of body, but a shapelesse masse, without light or fashion, unlesse faith and the grace of God be joyned thereunto. Faith, giving as it were a tincture and lustre unto *Sebonds* arguments, make them the more firme and solid: They may well serve for a direction and guide to a yong learner, to lead and set him in the right way of this knowledge. They in some sort fashion and make him capable of the grace of God, by meanes whereof our beliefe is afterward atchieved and made perfect. I know a man of authority, brought up in letters, who confessed unto me, that he was reclaimed from out the errours of mis-beleeving by the Arguments of *Sebond*. And if it happen, they be dispoyled of this ornament, and of the helpe and approbation of faith, and taken but for meere humane fantazies, yet to combat those that headlong are fallen into the dreadfull error, and horrible darkenesse of irreligion, even then, shall they be found as firme and forcible, as any other of that condition, that may be opposed against them. So that we shall stand upon termes to say unto our parties,

*Si melius quid habes, accersae, vel imperium fer.*

—*HOR. l. Epist. v. 6.*

If you have any better, send for me,  
Or else that I bid you, contented be.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

markes, therein imprinted by the hand of this great wondrous Architect, and that even in all things therein created, there must be some image, some what resembling, and having coherencie with the workeman that wrought and framed them. He hath left imprinted in these high and misterious works, the characters of his divinitie: and onely our imbecilitie is the cause, wee can nor discover nor read them. It is that which himselfe telleth us *That by his visible operations, hee doth manifest those that are invisible to us.* Sebond hath much travelled about this worthie studie, and sheweth us, *That there is no parcell of this world, that either belyeth or shameth his Maker.* It were a manifest wronging of Gods goodnesse, if all this universe did not consent and sympathize with our beleefe. Heaven, earth, the elements, our bodies, our soule; yea all things else, conspire and agree unto it: onely the meanes how to make use of them must be found out: They will instruct us sufficiently, be we but capable to learne and apt to understand. For, *this world is a most holy Temple, into which man is brought there to behold Statues and Images, not wrought by mortall hand, but such as the secret thought of God hath made sensible, as the Sunne the Starres, the Waters, and the Earth, thereby to represent the intelligible unto us. The invisible things of God (saith Saint Paul) doe evidently appeare by the creation of the world, judgeing of his eternall Wisedome and Divinity by his workes.*

*Atque adeo faciem cæli non invidet orbi,  
Ipse Deus, vultusque suos corpusque recludit,  
Semper volvendo: seque ipsum inculcat et offert  
Ut bene cognosci possit, doceatque videndo  
Qualis eat doceatque suas attendere leges.*—MANIL. iv. 840.

God to the world doth not heav'ns face envie,  
But by still moving it doth notifie  
His face and essence, doth himselfe applie,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

That he may well be knowne, and teach by seeing,  
How he goes, how we should marke his decreeing.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Now our reason and humane discourse, is as the lumpish and barren matter; and the grace of God is the forme thereof. T'is that, which giveth both fashion and worth unto it. Even as the vertuous actions of *Socrates* and *Cato*, are but frivolous and [un]profitable, because they had not their end, and regarded not the love and obedience of the true creator of all things; and namely, because they were ignorant of the true knowledge of God: So is it of our imaginations and discourse; they have a kind of body, but a shapelesse masse, without light or fashion, unlesse faith and the grace of God be joyned thereunto. Faith, giving as it were a tincture and lustre unto *Sebonds* arguments, make them the more firme and solid: They may well serve for a direction and guide to a yong learner, to lead and set him in the right way of this knowledge. They in some sort fashion and make him capable of the grace of God, by meanes whereof our beliefe is afterward atchieved and made perfect. I know a man of authority, brought up in letters, who confessed unto me, that he was reclaimed from out the errours of mis-beleeving by the Arguments of *Sebond*. And if it happen, they be dispoyled of this ornament, and of the helpe and approbation of faith, and taken but for meere humane fantazies, yet to combat those that headlong are fallen into the dreadfull error, and horrible darkenesse of irreligion, even then, shall they be found as firme and forcible, as any other of that condition, that may be opposed against them. So that we shall stand upon termes to say unto our parties,

*Si melius quid habes, accerse, vel imperium fer.*

—HOR. i. *Epist.* v. 6.

If you have any better, send for me;  
Or else that I bid you, contented be.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*of his knowledge, doth not yet know what knowledge is: and that man, who is nothing, if he but thinke to be something, seduceth and deceiveth himselfe?* These sentences of the Holy Ghost, doe so lively and manifestly expresse, what I would maintaine, as I should neede no other prooffe against such as with all submission and obeysance would yeeld to his authority. But these will needs be whipt to their owne cost, and cannot abide their reason to be combated, but by it selfe. Let us now but consider man alone without other help, armed but with his owne weapons, and unprovided of the grace and knowledge of God, which is all his honour, all his strength, and all the ground of his being. Let us see what hold-fast, or free-hold he hath in this gorgeous, and goodly equipage. Let him with the utmost power of his discourse make me understand, upon what foundation, he hath built those great advantages and ods, he supposeth to have over other creatures. Who hath perswaded him, that this admirable moving of heavens vaults; that the eternal light of these lampes so fiercely rowling over his head; that the horror-moving and continuall motion of this infinite vaste Ocean, were established, and continue so many ages for his commoditie and service? Is it possible to imagine any thing so ridiculous, as this miserable and wretched creature, which is not so much as master of himselfe, exposed and subject to offences of all things, and yet dareth call himselfe Master and Emperour of this Universe? In whose power it is not to know the least part of it, much lesse to command the same. And the privilege, which he so fondly challengeth, to be the onely absolute creature in this huge worlds-frame, perfectly able to know the absolute beautie, and severall parts thereof, and that he is only of power to yeeld the great Architect thereof, due thanks for it, and to keepe account

## THE SECOND BOOKE

both of the receipts and layings out of the world. **CHAPTER XII**  
**Who hath sealed him this patent? Let him shew us**  
**his letters of privilege, for so noble and so great a**  
**charge. Have they beene granted onely in favour**  
**of the wise? Then concerne they but a few. Are**  
**the foolish and wicked worthy of so extraordinary a**  
**favour? Who being the worst part of the world,**  
**should they be preferred before the rest? Shall**  
**we beleeve him: *Quorum igitur causa quis dixerit***  
***effectum esse mundum? Eorum scilicet animantium***  
***quæ ratione utuntur. Hi sunt dii et homines, quibus***  
***perfecto nihil est melius* (CIC. Nat. Deo. ii.). For**  
**whose cause then shall a man say, that the world was**  
**made? In sooth, for those creatures sake, which have**  
**the use of reason: Those are Gods and men, than**  
**whom assuredly nothing is better. We shall never**  
**sufficiently baffle the impudency of this conjoyning,**  
**But silly wretch, what hath he in him worthy such**  
**an advantage? To consider the incorruptible life of**  
**the celestiall bodies, their beauty, greatnesse, and**  
**agitation, continued with so just and regular a**  
**course:**

—*cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi*  
*Templa super, stellisque micantibus Æthera fixum,*  
*Et venit in mentem Lunæ Solisque viarum.*

—LUCR. v. 1214.

When we of this great world the heavenly temples see  
 Above us, and the skies with shine-stars fixt to be,  
 And marke in our discourse,  
 Of Sunne and Moone the course.

To consider the power and domination, these bodies  
 have, not onely upon our lives, and condition of our  
 fortune;

*Facta etenim et ritas hominum suspendit ab astris.*

—MANIL. Astron. iii. 58.

For on the stars he doth suspend  
 Of men, the deede, the lives, and end.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

But also over our dispositions and inclinations, our discourses and wils, which they rule, provoke, and move at the pleasure of their influences, as our reason finds and teacheth us.

—*speculatâque longé  
Deprendit tacitis dominantia legibus astra,  
Et totum alternâ mundum ratione moveri,  
Fatorumque vices certis discernere signis.*

—MANIL. *Astron.* i. 62.

By speculation it from far discern's,  
How star's by secret lawes do guide our sterns,  
And this whole world is moov'd by entercourse  
And by sure signes of fates to know the course.

Seeing that not a man alone, nor a King only,  
But Monarchies and Empires, yea, and all this world  
below is moved at the shaking of one of the least  
heavenly motions.

—*Quantaque quam parvi faciant discrimina motus :  
Tantum est hoc regnum quod regibus imperat ipsis.*

—MANIL. *Astron.* iv. 93.

How little motions make, how different affection :  
So great this Kingdome is, that hath Kings in sub-  
jection.

If our vertue, vices, sufficiency and knowledge,  
and the same discourse we make of the power of the  
starres, and the comparison betweene them and us,  
commeth as our reason judgeth by their meane and  
through their favour.

—*furit alter amore,  
Et pontum tranare potest et vertere Troiam,  
Alterius sors est scribendis legibus apta :  
Ecce patrem nati perimunt, natosque parentes,  
Mutuaque armati coeunt in vulnera fratres,  
Non nostrum hoc bellum est, coguntur tanta movere,  
Inque suas ferri pœnas, lacerandaque membra :  
Hoc quoque fatale est sic ipsum expendere fatum.*

—MANIL. *Astron.* iv. 78, 118.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

One with love madded, his love to enjoy,  
Can crosse the seas, and overturne all *Troy*:  
Anothers lot is to set lawes severe.  
Loe sonnes kill fathers, fathers sonnes destroy,  
Brothers for mutuall wounds their armes doe beare,  
Such war is not our owne, forc't are we to it,  
Drawne to our owne paines, our owne limbs to teare;  
Fates so t'observe t'is fatall, we must doe it.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

If we hold that portion of reason, which we have, from the distribution of heaven, how can she make us equall unto it? How can she submit his essence and conditions unto our knowledge? Whatsoever we behold in those huge bodies, doth affright us: *Quæ molitio, quæ ferramenta, qui vectes, quæ machinæ, qui ministri tanti operis fuerunt?* (Cic. *Nat. Deo. i.*). What workemanship? What yron-braces? What maine beames, what engines? What *Masons and Carpenters*, were to so great a worke? Why doe we then deprive them of soule, of life, and of discourse? Have we discovered or knowen any unmoveable or insensible stupidity in them? We, who have no commerce but of obedience with them? Shall we say we have seene the use of a reasonable soule, in no other creature, but in man? What? Have we seene any thing comparable to the Sunne? Leaveth he to be, because we have seene nothing semblable unto it? And doth he leave his moving, because his equall is no where to be found? If that which we have not seene, is not, our knowledge is wonderfull abridged. *Quæ sunt tantæ animi angustie?* What narrownesse of my heart is such? Be they not dreames of humane vanity, to make a celestiaall earth, or world of the Moone? As *Anaxagoras* did? And therein to plant worldly habitations, and as *Plato* and *Plutarch* doe, erect their colonies for our use. And to make of our knowne earth a bright shining planet? *Inter cætera mortalitatis incommoda, et hoc est caligo mentium: nec tantum*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*necessitas errandi, sed errorum amor* (SEN. *Ira*, ii. cap. 9). Among other discommodities of our mortality this is one, there is darknesse in our minds, and in us not onely necessity of erring, but a love of errors. *Corruptibile corpus aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem* (SEN. *Epist.* xcv.). Our corruptible body doth overlode our soule, and our dwelling on earth weighes downe our sense, that is set to thinke of many matters. Pre-sumption is our naturall and originall infirmitie. Of all creatures man is the most miserable and fraile, and therewithall the proudest and disdainfullest. Who perceiveth and seeth himselfe placed here, amidst their filth and mire of the world, fast tied and nailed to the worst, most senselesse, and drooping part of the world, in the vilest corner of the house, and farthest from heavens coape, with those creatures, that are the worst of the three conditions; and yet dareth imaginarily place himselfe above the circle of the Moone, and reduce heaven under his feet. It is through the vanity of the same imagination, that he dare equall himselfe to God, that he ascribeth divine conditions unto himselfe, that he selecteth and separateth himselfe from out the ranke of other creatures; to which his fellow-brethren and compeers, he cuts out and shareth their parts, and allotteth them what portions of meanes or forces he thinkes good. How knoweth he by the vertue of his understanding the inward and secret motions of beasts? By what comparison from them to us doth he conclude the brutishnesse, he ascribeth unto them? When I am playing with my Cat, who knowes whether she have more sport in dallying with me, than I have in gaming with her? We entertaine one another with mutuall apish trickes, If I have my houre to begin or to refuse, so hath she hers. *Plato* in setting forth the golden age under *Saturne*,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

amongst the chiefe advantages that man had then, **CHAPTER**  
reporteth the communication he had with beasts, of **XII**  
whom enquiring and taking instruction, he knew the  
true qualities, and differences of every one of them :  
by, and from whom he got an absolute understanding  
and perfect wisdom, whereby he led a happier life  
than we can doe. Can we have a better prooffe to  
judge of mans impudency, touching beasts? This  
notable Author was of opinion, that in the greatest  
part of the corporall forme, which nature hath be-  
stowed on them, she hath onely respected the use of  
the Prognostications, which in his daies were thereby  
gathered. That defect which hindreth the communi-  
cation betweene them and us, why may it not as well  
be in us, as in them? It is a matter of divination to  
guesse in whom the fault is, that we understand not  
one another. For, we understand them no more  
than they us. By the same reason, may they as well  
esteeme us beasts, as we them. It is no great mar-  
vell if we understand them not: no more doe we  
the Cornish, the Welch, or Irish. Yet have some  
boasted that they understood them, as *Apollonius*  
*Thyaneus*, *Melampus*, *Tiresias*, *Thales* and others.  
And if it be (as Cosmographers report) that there  
are Nations, who receive and admit a Dogge to be  
their King, it must necessarily follow, that they give  
a certaine interpretation to his voice and moving.  
We must note the parity that is betweene us. We  
have some meane understanding of their senses, so  
have beasts of ours, about the same measure. They  
flatter and faune upon us, they threat, and entreat  
us, so doe we them. Touching other matters, we  
manifestly perceive, that there is a full and perfect  
communication amongst them, and that not onely  
those of one same kinde understand one another, but  
even such as are of different kindes.

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Et mutæ pecudes, et denique secla ferarum  
Dissimiles fuerunt voces variasque cluere  
Cum metus aut dolor est, aut cum iam gaudia gliscunt.*  
—LUCR. v. 1069.

Whole heard's (though dumbe) of beasts, both wild  
and tame,  
Use divers voices, diffrent sounds to frame,  
As joy, or grieve, or feare,  
Upspringing passions beare.

By one kinde of barking of a Dogge, the Horse knoweth he is angrie; by another voice of his, he is nothing dismaid. Even in beasts, that have no voice at all, by the reciprocall kindnesse, which we see in them, we easily inferre there is some other meane of entercommunication: their jestures treat, and their motions discourse.

*Non alia longè ratione atque ipsa videtur  
Protrahere ad gestum, pueros infantia linguæ.*  
—Ib. 1040.

No otherwise, then for they cannot speake,  
Children are drawne by signes their mindes to breake.

And why not, as well as our dumbe men dispute, argue and tell histories by signes? I have seene some so ready and so excellent in it, that (in good sooth) they wanted nothing to have their meaning perfectly understood. Doe we not daily see lovers with the lookes and rowling of their eyes, plainly shew when they are angrie or pleased, and how they entreat and thanke one another, assigne meetings, and expresse any passion?

*E'l silentio ancor suole  
Haver prieghi et parole.*

Silence also hath a way,  
Words and prayers to convay.

What doe we with our hands? Doe we not sue and entreat, promise and performe, call men unto us and discharge them, bid them farwell and be gone,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

threaten, pray, beseech, deny, refuse, demand, admire, number, confesse, repent, feare, bee ashamed, doubt, instruct, command, incite, encourage, sweare, witness, accuse, condemne, absolve, injurie, despise, defie, despight, flatter, applaud, blesse, humble, mocke, reconcile, recommend, exalt, shew gladnesse, rejoyce, complaine, waile, sorrow, discomfort, dispaire, cry out, forbid, declare silence and astonishment? And what not? With so great variation, and amplifying, as if they would contend with the tongue. And with our head, doe we not invite and call to us, discharge and send away, avow, disavow, belie, welcome, honour, worship, disdain, demand, direct, rejoyce, affirme, deny, complaine, cherish, blandish, chide, yeeld, submit, brag, boast, threaten, exhort, warrant, assure, and enquire? What doe we with our eye-lids? and with our shoulders? To conclude, there is no motion, nor jesture that doth not speake, and speakes in a language very easie, and without any teaching to be understood: nay, which is more, it is a language common and publike to all: whereby it followeth (seeing the varietie, and severall use it hath from others) that this must rather be deemed the proper and peculiar speech of humane nature. I omit that, which necessitie in time of need doth particularly instruct and suddenly teach such as need it; and the alphabets upon fingers, and grammars by jestures; and the sciences which are onely exercised and expressed by them: and the nations *Plinie* reporteth to have no other speech. An Ambassador of the Citie of *Abdera*, after he had talked a long time unto *Agis* King of *Sparta*, said thus unto him: O King, what answer wilt thou that I beare backe unto our citizens? Thus (answered he) that I have suffered thee to speake all thou wouldst, and as long as thou pleasedst, without ever speaking one word. Is not this a kinde of

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

speaking silence, and easie to be understood? And as for other matters; what sufficiency is there in us, that we must not acknowledge from the industry and labours of beasts? Can there be a more formall, and better ordered policie, divided into so severall charges and offices, more constantly entertained, and better maintained, than that of Bees? Shall we imagine, their so orderly disposing of their actions, and managing of their vacations, have so proportioned and formall a conduct without discourse, reason, and forecast?

*His quidam signis atque hæc exempla sequuti,  
Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus  
Æthereos dixere.—VIRG. Georg. iv. 219.*

Some by these signes, by these examples moved,  
Said that in Bees there is and may be proved  
Some taste of heavenly kinde,  
Part of celestiall minde.

The Swallowes which at the approach of spring time we see to pry, to search, and ferret all the corners of our houses; is it without judgement they seeke, or without discretion they chuse from out a thousand places, that which is fittest for them, to build their nests and lodging? And in that pretty cunning contexture, and admirable framing of their houses, would birds rather fit themselves with a round, than a square figure, with an obtuse, than a right angle, except they knew both the commodities and effects of them? Would they (suppose you) first take water and then clay, unlesse they guessed that the hardnesse of the one is softned by the moistnesse of the other? Would they floore their palace with mosse or downe, except they foresaw that the tender parts of their young ones shall thereby lie more soft and easie? Would they shroud and shelter themselves from stormy weather,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

and build their cabbins toward the East, unlesse they knew the different conditions of winds, and considered that some are more healthfull and safe for them than some others? Why doth the Spider spin her artificiall web thicke in one place and thin in another? And now useth one, and then another knot, except she had an imaginary kinde of deliberation, forethought, and conclusion? We perceive by the greater part of their workes what excellency beasts have over us, and how weake our art and short our cunning is, if we goe about to imitate them. We see notwithstanding, even in our grosest workes, what faculties we employ in them, and how our minde employeth the uttermost of her skill and forces in them: why should wee not thinke as much of them? Wherefore doe we attribute the workes, which excell what ever we can performe, either by nature or by art, unto a kinde of unknowne, naturall, and servile inclination? Wherein unawares wee give them a great advantage over us, to infer that nature, led by a certaine loving kindnesse, leadeth and accompanieth them (as it were by the hand) unto all the actions and commodities of their life; and that she forsaketh and leaveth us to the hazard of fortune; and by art to quest and finde out those things that are behovefull and necessarie for our preservation: and therewithall denieth us the meanes to attaine by any institution and contention of spirit to the naturall sufficiency of brute beasts: So that their brutish stupidity doth in all commodities exceed, whatsoever our divine intelligence can effect. Verily, by this account wee might have just cause and great reason to terme her a most unjust and partiall stepdame: But there is no such thing, our policy is not so deformed and disordered. *Nature hath generally embraced all her creatures:* And there is not any, but she hath amply stored with all necessary meanes for



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

the preservation of their being. For the daily complaints, which I often heare men make (when the licence of their conceits doth sometimes raise them above the clouds, and then headlong tumbling them downe even to the *Antipodes*) exclaiming that man is the onely forsaken and out-cast creature, naked on the bare earth, fast bound and swathed, having nothing to cover and arme himselfe withall but the spoile of others; whereas Nature hath clad and mantled all other creatures, some with shels, some with huskes, with rindes, with haire, with wooll, with stings, with bristles, with hides, with mosse, with feathers, with skales, with fleeces, and with silke, according as their quality might need, or their condition require: And hath fenced and armed them with clawes, with nailes, with talons, with hooves, with teeth, with stings, and with hornes, both to assaile others and to defend themselves: And hath moreover instructed them in every thing fit and requisite for them, as to swim, to runne, to creepe, to flie, to roare, to bellow, and to sing: where as man only (Oh silly wretched man) can neither goe, nor speake, nor shift, nor feed himselfe, unlesse it be to whine and weepe onely, except hee bee taught.

*Tum porro, puer ut sævis projectus ab undis  
Navita, nudus humi jacet infans, indigus omni  
Vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras  
Nexibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,  
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est  
Cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum:  
At varix crescunt pecudes, armenta, feræque,  
Nec crepitacula eis opus est, nec cuiquam adhibenda est  
Almæ nutricis blanda atque infracta loquela:  
Nec varias quærun vestes pro tempore cæli:  
Denique non armis opus est, non mœnibus altis  
Queis sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia large  
Tellus ipsa parit, naturaque dædala rerum.*

—LUCR. v. 222.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

An infant, like a shipwrecke ship-boy cast from seas,  
Lies naked on the ground and speechlesse, wanting all  
The helpe of vitall spirit, when nature with small ease  
Of throw's, to see first light, from her wombe lets him fall,  
Then, as is meet, with mourn'full cries he fills the place,  
For whom so many ills remaine in his lives race.  
But divers herds of tame and wild beasts foreward spring,  
Nor need they rattles, nor of Nurces cockring-kind  
The flattering broken speech their lullaby need sing.  
Nor seeke they divers coats, as divers seasons bind.  
Lastly no armour need they, nor high-reared wall  
Whereby to guard their owne, since all things unto all  
Worke-masters nature doth produce,  
And the earth largely to their use.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Such complaints are false; There is a greater equality, and more uniforme relation in the policy of the world. Our skin is as sufficiently provided with hardnesse against the injuries of the wether, as theirs: Witnesse divers Nations, which yet never knew the use of clothes. Our ancient Gaules were but slightly apparelled, no more are the Irish-men, our neighbours, in so cold a climate: Which we may better judge by our selves; for, all those parts of our bodie, we are pleased to leave bare to winde and wether, are by experience found able to endure it: If there be any weake part in us, which in likely-hood should seeme to feare cold, it ought to be the stomacke, where digestion is made: Our forefathers used to have it bare, and our Ladies (as dainty-nice as they be) are many times seene to goe open-breasted, as low as their navill. The bandles and swathes about our children are no more necessary: And the mothers of *Lacedemonia*, brought up theirs in all liberty and loosenesse of moving their limbs without swathing or binding. Our whining, our puling and our weeping is common to most creatures, and divers of them are often seene to waile and grone a long time after their birth, forsomuch as it is a countenance fitting the weaknesse wherein they feele themselves. As for the

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER XII use of eating, and feeding, it is in us, as in them,  
natural and without teaching.

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Sentit enim vim quisque suam quam possit abuti.*

—*Ibid.* 1043.

For every one soone-understanding is  
Of his owne strength, which he may use amisse.

Who will make question, that a child having attained the strength to feed himselfe, could not quest for his meat, and shift for his drinke? The earth without labour or tilling doth sufficiently produce and offer him as much as he shall need. And if not at all times, no more doth she unto beasts; witnesse the provision, wee see the Ants and other silly creatures to make against the cold and barren seasons of the yeare. The nations, that have lately bin discovered, so plenteously stored with all manner of naturall meat and drinke, without care or labor, teach us, that bread is not our onely food: And that without toyling, our common mother nature, hath with great plentie stored us with whatsoever should be needfull for us, yea, as it is most likely, more richly and amply, than now adaies she doth, that we have added so much art unto it:

*Et tellus nitidas fruges vinetaque læta  
Sponte sua primum mortalibus ipsa creavit,  
Ipsa dedit dulces fœtus, et pabula læta,  
Quæ nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,  
Conterimusque boves et vires agricolarum.*—*Lucr.* ii. 1166.

The earth it selfe at first of th' owne accord  
Did men rich Vineyards, and cleane fruit afford.  
It gave sweet of-springs food from sweeter soyle  
Which yet scarce greater grow for all our toyle,  
Yet tire therein we doe,  
Both Plough-mens strength and Oxen too.

The gluttonous excesse, and intemperate lavish-  
nesse of our appetite exceeding all the inventions, we  
endeavour to finde out, wherewith to glut and cloy



## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

the same. As for armes and weapons, we have more, that be naturall unto us, than the greatest part of other beasts: We have more severall motions of limbs, and naturally, without teaching: We reape more serviceable use of them, than they do: Those which are trained up to fight naked, are seene head long to cast themselves into the same hazards and dangers, as we doe. If some beasts excell us in this advantage, we exceed many others: And the industrie to enable, the skill to fortifie, and the wit to shelter and cover our body by artificiall meanes, we have it by a kind of naturall instinct and teaching. Which to prove; the Elephant doth whet and sharpen his teeth, he useth in warre (for he hath some he onely useth for that purpose) which he heedfully spareth, and never puts them to other service: When Bulls prepare themselves to fight, they raise, scatter, and with their feet, cast the dust about them: The wild Boare whets his tuskes; when the *Ichneumon* is to grapple with the Crocodile, he walloweth his body in the mire, then lets the same drie and harden upon him, which he doth so often, that at last the same becomes as hard and tough as any well compact crust, which serveth him in stead of a Cuirace. Why shall we not say, that it is as naturall for us to arme our selves with wood and yron? As for speech, sure it is, that if it be not naturall it is not necessary. I beleeve neverthelesse, that if a childe, bred in some uncouth solitarinesse, farre from haunt of people (though it were a hard matter to make triall of it) would no doubt have some kind of words to expresse, and speech to utter his conceits: And it is not to be imagined, that nature hath refused us that meane, and barred us that helpe, which she hath bestowed upon many and divers other creatures: For, what is that faculty we see in them, when they seeme to complaine, to rejoyce, to call one unto another for



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

helpe, and bid one another to loving copulation (as commonly they doe) by the use of their voice, but a kind of speech? And shall not they speake among themselves, that speake and utter their minde unto us, and we to them? How many waies speake we unto our Dogges, and they seeme to understand and answer us? With another language, and with other names speake we unto, and call them, than we doe our Birds, our Hogges, our Oxen, our Horses, and such like; and according to their different kindes we change our Idiome.

*Così per entro loro schiera bruna  
S' ammusà l'una con l'altra formica,  
Forse à spiàr lor via, et lor fortuna.*

So Ants amidst their sable-coloured band  
One with another mouth to mouth confer,  
Haply their way, or state to understand.

Me seemeth that *Lactantius* doth not onely attribute speech unto beasts, but also laughing. And the same difference of tongues, which according to the diversity of Countries is found amongst us, is also found amongst beasts of one same kinde. *Aristotle* to that purpose alleageth the divers calles or purrees of Partriges, according to the situation of their place of breeding:

—*variæque volucres  
Longe alias alio jaciunt in tempore voces,  
Et partim mutant cum tempestatibus unâ  
Raucisonos.*—*LUCR.* v. 1088.

And divers birds, send forth much divers sounds  
At divers times, and partly change the grounds  
Of their hoarse-sounding song,  
As seasons change along.

But it would be knowen, what language such a child should speake: and what some report by divination, hath no great likely-hood. And if against

## THE SECOND BOOKE

this opinion, a man would alleage unto me, that such as are naturally deafe, speake not at all: I answer, that it is not onely because they could not receive the instruction of the world by their eares, but rather in asmuch as the sense of hearing, whereof they are deprived, hath some affinity with that of speaking, both which with a naturall kinde of ligament or seame, hold and are fastned together: In such sort, as what we speake, we must first speake it unto our selves, and before we utter and send the same forth to strangers, we make it inwardly to sound unto our eares. I have said all this, to maintaine the coherency and resemblance, that is in all humane things, and to bring us unto the generall throng. We are neither above nor under the rest: what ever is under the coape of heaven (saith the wise man) runneth one law, and followeth one fortune.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vincit.*—*Ibid*, 885.

All things enfolded are,  
In fatall bonds as fits their share.

Some difference there is, there are orders and degrees; but all is under the visage of one-same nature.

*—res quæque suo ritu procedit, et omnes  
Fadere naturæ certo discrimina seruant.*—*Ibid*, 932.

All things proceed in their course, natures all  
Keepe difference, as in their league doth fall.

Man must be forced, and marshalled within the lists of this policie. Miserable man with all his wit cannot in effect goe beyond it: he is embraced, and engaged, and as other creatures of his ranke are, he is subjected in like bondes, and without any prerogative or essentiall pre-excellencie, what ever Privilege he assume unto himselfe, he is of very meane condition. That which is given by opinion or fantasie hath



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

neither body nor taste. And if it be so, that he alone, above all other Creatures, hath this liberty of imagination, and this licence of thoughts, which represent unto him, both what is, and what is not and what him pleaseth, falsehood and truth; it is an advantage bought at a very high rate, and whereof he hath litle reason to glorie: For thence springs the chiefest source of all the mischiefs that oppresse him, as sinne, sicknesse, irresolution, trouble and despaire. But to come to my purpose, I say therefore, there is no likelyhood, we should imagine, the beasts doe the very same things by a naturall inclination and forced genuitie, which we doe of our owne freewil and industrie. Of the very same effects we must conclude alike faculties; and by the richest effects infer the noblest faculties, and consequently acknowledge, that the same discourse and way, we hold in working, the very same, or perhaps some other better, doe beasts hold. Wherefore shall we imagine that naturall compulsion in them, that prove no such effect our selves? Since it is more honourable to be addressed to act, and tyed to worke orderly, by and through a naturall and unavoideable condition, and most approaching to Divinitie, than regularly to worke and act, by, and through a casuall and rash libertie; and it is safer to leave the reignes of our conduct unto nature, than unto ourselves. The vanitie of our presumption maketh us rather to be beholding, and as it were endebted unto our owne strength, for our sufficiency, than unto her liberalitie; and enrich other creatures with naturall gifts, and yeeld those unto them, that so we may enoble and honour our selves with gifts purchased, as me thinketh, by a very simple humour: For, I would prize graces, and value gifts, that were altogether mine owne, and naturall unto me, as much as I would those, I had begged, and with a long prenti-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

ship, shifted for. *It lyeth not in our power to obtaine a greater commendation, than to be favoured both of God and Nature.* By that reason, the Fox, which the inhabitants of *Thrace* use when they will attempt to march upon the yce of some frozen river, and to that end let her go loose afore them, should we see her running alongst the river side, approach her eare close to the yce, to listen whether by any farre or neere distance, she may heare the noyse or roaring of the water, running under the same, and according as she perceiveth the yce thereby to be thicke or thinne, to goe either forward or backward; might not we lawfully judge, that the same discourse possesseth her head, as in like case it would ours? And that it is a kinde of debating reason and consequence, drawn from naturall sense? *Whatsoever maketh a noyse moveth, whatsoever moveth, is not frozen, whatsoever is not frozen, is liquid; whatsoever is liquid, yeelds under any weight?* For to impute that only to a quicknesse of the sense of hearing, without discourse or consequence, is but a fond conceipt, and cannot enter into my imagination. The like must be judged of so many wiles, and inventions, wherewith beasts save themselves from the snares, and scape the baits we lay to entrap them. And if we will take hold of any advantage tending to that purpose, that it is in our power to seize upon them, to employ them to our service, and to use them at our pleasure; it is but the same oddes we have one upon another. To which purpose we have our slaves or bond-men; and were not the Climacides, certaine women in *Syria*, which creeping on al foure, upon the ground, served the Ladies in steed of footstoles or ladders to get up into their coachs? Where the greater part of free men for very slight causes, abandon both their life and being, to the power of others. The wives and Concubines of the *Thracians* strive and contend,

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

which of them shalbe chosen, to bee slaine over her husbands or lovers tombe. Have tyrants ever failed to find many men vowed to their devotion? Where some for an over-plus, or supererogation have added this necessity, that they must necessarily accompany them, as well in death, as in life. Whole hostes of men have thus tyed themselves unto their Captaines. The tenor of the oath ministred unto the schollers, that entered and were admitted the rude schoole of Roman Gladiators, emplied these promises: which was this. We vow and sweare, to suffer our selves, to be enchained, beaten, burned and killed with the sword, and endure whatsoever any lawfull fenser ought to endure for his master: most religiously engaging both our bodie and soule to the use of his service:

*Ure meum si vis flamma caput, et pete ferro  
Corpus, et intorto verberare terga seca.*

—TIBUL. i. El. ix. 21.

Burne tyrant (if thou wilt) my head with fire, with sword  
My body strike, my backe cut with hard-twisted cord.

Was not this a very strict covenant? Yet were there some yeares ten thousand found, that entered and lost themselves in those schooles. When the Scithians buried their King, they strangled over his dead body first, the chiefest and best beloved of his Concubines, then his Cup-bearer, the Master of his horse, his Chamberlaine, the Usher of his Chamber, and his master Cooke. And in his anniversary killed fiftie horse, mounted with fifty Pages, whom before, they had slaine with thrusting sharpe stakes into their fundament, which going up along their chine-bone, came out at their throat. Whom thus mounted; they set in orderly rankes about the tombe. The men that serve us, doe it better cheape, and for a lesse curious, and favourable entreating, than we use unto birds, unto horses, and unto dogges. What



## THE SECOND BOOKE

earke and toile, apply we not our selves unto for their sakes? Me thinks, the vilest and basest servants will never doe that so willingly for their Masters, which Princes are glad to doe for their beasts. *Diogenes* seeing his kinsfolks to take care how they might redeeme him out of thraldome; they are fooles (said he) for, it is my Master, that governeth, keepeth feedeth and serveth mee: And such as keepe or entertaine beasts, may rather say they serve them, than that they are served of them. And if they have that naturall greater magnanimity, that never Lyon was scene to subject himselfe unto another Lyon, nor one Horse unto another Horse, for want of heart. As wee hunt after beasts, so Tygers and Lyons hunt after men, and have a like exercise one upon another: Hounds over the Hare; the Pike or Luce over the Tench; the Swallowes over the Grasse-hoppers, and the Sparrow-hawkes over Blackebirds and Larkes.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—serpente ciconia pullos  
Nutrit, et inventa per devia rura lacerta,  
Et leporem aut capream famulae Jovis, et generosæ  
In saltu venantur aves.—*JUV. Sat. xiv. 74.*

The storke her young-ones feeds with serpents prey,  
And lyzerts found somewhere out of the way.  
Joves servants-Eagles, hawkes of nobler kinde,  
In forrests hunt, a hare or kid to finde.

We share the fruits of our prey with our dogges and hawkes, as a meed of their paine and reward of their industry. As about *Amphipolis* in *Thrace*, faulkners, and wilde hawks divide their game equally: And as about the *Mæotide-fennes*, if fishers doe not very honestly leave behind them an even share of their fishings for the Woolves that range about those coasts, they presently run and teare their nets. And, as we have a kinde of fishing, rather managed by sleight, than strength, as that of hooke and line



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

about our Angling-rods, so have beasts amongst themselves. *Aristotle* reporteth, that the Cuttle-Fish, casteth a long gut out of her throat, which like a line she sendeth forth, and at her pleasure pulleth it in againe, according as she perceiveth some little fish come neere her, who being close-hidden in the gravell or stronde, letteth him nibble or bite the end of it, and then by little and little drawes it in unto her, untill the Fish be so neere, that with a sodaine leape she may catch it. Touching strength, there is no Creature in the world, open to so many wrongs and injuries as man: He need not a Whale, an Elephant, nor a Crocodile, nor any such other wilde beast, of which one alone is of power to defeat a great number of men: seely lice are able to make *Silla* give over his Dictatorship: The heart and life of a mighty and triumphant Emperour, is but the break-fast of a seely little Worme. Why say we, that skill to discerne, and knowledge to make choyce (gotten by art, and acquired by discourse) of things good for this life, and availfull against sicknesse, and so distinguish of those which are hurtfull, and to know the vertue of Reubarb, qualitie of Oake ferne, and operation of Polipodie, is only peculiar unto man? When we see the Goats of *Candia* being shot with an arrow, to choose from out a million of simples, the herb Dittamy or Garden-ginger, and therewith cure themselves; and the Tortoise having eaten of a Viper, immediatly to seek for Origon or wild Marjoram, to purge herselfe: the Dragon to run and cleare his eies with fenel: the Cranes with their bills to minister glisters of sea-water unto themselves; the Elephants to pull out, not only from themselves and their fellowes, but also from their masters (witness that of King *Porus*, whom *Alexander* defeated) such javelins or darts, as in fight have beene thirled or shot at them; so nimbly and so cunningly, as our

## THE SECOND BOOKE

selves could never do it so easily, and with so little pain: Why say wee not likewise that that is science, and prudence in them? For, if to depresse them, some would alleadge, it is by the onely instruction and instinet of Nature, they know-it; that will not take the name of science, and title of prudence from them; it is rather to ascribe it unto them, than to us, for the honour of so assured a schoole-mistris. *Chrysippus*, albeit in other things as disdainfull a judge of the condition of beasts, as any other Philosopher, considering the earnest movings of the dog, who comming into a path, that led three severall wayes, in search or quest of his Master, whom he had lost, or in pursuit of some prey, that hath escaped him, goeth senting first one way, and then another, and having assured himself of two, because he findeth not the tracke of what he hunteth-for, without more adoe, furiously betakes himselfe to the third; he is enforced to confesse, that such a dog must necessarily discourse thus with himselfe, *I have followed my Masters footing hitherto, hee must of necessity passe by one of these three wayes; it is neither this nor that, then consequently hee is gone this other*. And by this conclusion or discourse assuring himselfe, comming to the third path, hee useth his sense no more, nor sounds it any longer, but by the power of reason suffers himselfe violently to be caried through it. This meere logicall tricke, and this use of divided and conjoynd propositions, and of the sufficient numbring of parts: Is it not as good, that the dog know it by himselfe, as by *Trapezuntius* his logicke? Yet are not beasts altogether unapt to be instructed after our manner. We teach Blacke-birds, Starlins, Ravens, Piots, and Parots to chat; and that facilitie we perceive in them, to lend us their voyce so supple, and their wind so tractable, that so wee may frame and bring it to a certaine number of letters and silables,

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

witnesseth, they have a kind of inward reason, which makes them so docile, and willing to learne. I thinke every man is cloied and wearied, with seeing so many apish and mimike trickes, that juglers teach their Dogges, as the dances, where they misse not one cadence of the sounds or notes they heare: Marke but the divers turnings, and severall kinds of motions, which by the commandement of their bare words they make them performe: But I wonder not a little at the effect, which is ordinary amongst us; and that is, the dogs which blind men use, both in Citie and Country: I have observed how sodainly they will stop when they come before some doores, where they are wont to receive almes; how carefully they will avoyd the shocke of Carts and Coaches, even when they have roome enough to passe by them selves. I have seene some, going along a Towne-ditch, leave a plaine and even path, and take a worse, that so they might draw their Master from the ditch. How could a man make the dog conceive, his charge was only to looke to his masters safetie, and for his service to despise his owne commoditie and good? And how should he have the knowledge, that such a path would be broade enough for him, but not for a blind man? Can all this be conceived without reason? We must not forget what *Plutarke* affirmeth to have seene a dog in *Rome* doe before the Emperour *Vespasian* the father, in the Theatre of *Marcellus*. This Dog served a jugler, who was to play a fiction of many faces, and sundry countenances, where he also was to act a part. Amongst other things, he was for a long while to counterfeit and faine himselfe dead, because he had eaten of a certaine drugge: having swallowed a peece of bread, which was supposed to be the drug, he began sodainly to stagger and shake, as if he had beene giddie, then stretching and laying himselfe



## THE SECOND BOOKE

along, as stiffe as if hee were starke-dead, suffered himselfe to be dragged and haled from one place to another, according to the subject and plot of the play, and when he knew his time, first he began faire and softly to stirre, as if he were rouzed out of a dead slumber, then lifting up his head, hee looked and stared so gastly, that all the by-standers were amazed. The Oxen, which in the Kings gardens of *Susa* were taught to water them, and to draw water out of deepe Wells, turned certaine great wheelles, to which were fastned great buckets (as in many places of *Languedoke* is commonly seene) and being every one appoynted to draw just a hundred turnes a day, they were so accustomed to that number, as it was impossible by any compulsion to make them draw one more, which taske ended they would suddenly stop. We are growne striplings before we can tell a hundred; and many Nations have lately beene discovered, that never knew what numbers meant. More discourse is required to teach others, than to be taught. And omitting what *Democritus* judged and proved, which is, that beasts have instructed us in most of our Arts: As the Spider to weave and sew, the Swallow to build, the Swan, and the Nightingale musicke, and divers beasts, by imitating them, the Art of Physicke: *Aristotle* is of opinion, that Nightingales teach their young-ones to sing, wherein they employ both long time and much care: whence it followeth, that those which we keepe tame in Cages and have not had leasure to goe to their Parents schoole, lose much grace in their singing. Whereby we may conclude, they are much amended by discipline and study. And amongst those that run wilde, their song is not all one, nor alike. Each one hath learnt either better or worse, according to his capacity. And so jealous are they in their prentiseship, that to excell one another, they will so

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

stoutly contend for the mastery, that many times, such as are vanquished die; their wind and strength soner failing than their voice. The young-ones will very sadly sit recording their lesson, and are often seene labouring how to imitate certain song-notes: The Scholler listneth attentively to his Masters Lesson, and carefully yeeldeth account of it; now one and then another shall hold his peace: Marke but how they endeavour to amend their faults, and how the elder striveth to reprove the youngest. *Arrius* protesteth to have seene an Elephant, who on every thigh having a Cimball hanging, and one fastned to his trancke, at the sound of which, all other Elephants danced in a round, now rising aloft, then lowting full low at certaine cadences, even as the instrument directed them, and was much delighted with the harmony. In the great shewes of *Rome*, Elephants were ordinarily seene, taught to move and dance at the sound of a voice, certaine dances, wherein were may strange shifts, enterchanges, caprings, and cadences, very hard to be learned. Some have beene noted to konne and practise their lessons, using much study and care, as being loath to be chidden and beaten of their masters. But the tale of the *Piot* is very strange, which *Plutarke* confidently witnesseth to have seene: This Jay was in a Barbers shop of *Rome*, and was admirable in counterfeiting with her voice whatsoever she heard: It fortun'd one day, that certaine Trumpeters staid before this shop, and there sounded a good while; and being gone, all that day, and the next after, the *Piot* began to be very sad, silent, and melancholy, whereat all men marvelled, and surmized that the noise or clang of the Trumpets had thus affrighted and dizzied her, and that with her hearing she had also lost her voice. But at last they found, she was but in a deepe study, and dumpish retracting



## THE SECOND BOOKE

into her selfe, exercising her minde, and preparing her voice, to represent the sound, and expresse the noise of the Trumpets she had heard : And the first voice she uttered was that, wherein she perfectly expressed their straines, their closes, and their changes : having by her new Prentiship altogether quit, and as it were, scorned what ever shee could prattle before. I will not omit to alleage another example of a Dogge, which *Plutarke* also saith to have seene (as for any order or method, I know very well I doe but confound it, which I observe no more in ranging these examples, than I doe in all the rest of my businesse) who being in a ship, noted that this Dogge was in great perplexity how to get some Oyle out of a deepe Pitcher, which by reason of it's narrow mouth, he could not reach with his tongue, got him presently some Pibble stones, and put so many into the Jarre, that he made the Oyle come up so neare the brimme, as he could easily reach and licke some. And what is that but the effect of a very subtile spirit ? It is reported, that the Ravens of *Barbary* will doe the like, when the water they would drinke is too low. This action doth somewhat resemble that, which *Juba* a King of that Nation relateth of their Elephants, that when through the wiles of those who chase them, any one chanceth to fall into certaine deep pits, which they prepare for them, and to deceive them, they cover over with reeds, shrubs, and boughes, his fellowes will speedily with all diligence bring great store of stones and pieces of timber, that so they may helpe to recover him out againe. But this beast hath in many other effects, such affinity with mans sufficiency, that would I particularly trace out what experience hath taught, I should easily get an affirmation of what I so ordinarily maintaine, which is, that there is more difference found betweene such and such a man, than betweene such

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond.

a beast and such a man. An Elephants keeper in a private house of *Syria*, was wont every meale to steale away halfe of the allowance which was allotted him; it fortun'd on a day, his master would needs feed him himselfe, and having poured that just measure of barly, which for his allowance he had prescribed him, into his manger: the Elephant sternely eying his master, with his truncke divided the provender in two equall parts, and laid the one aside, by which he declared the wrong his keeper did him. Another having a keeper, who to encrease the measure of his provender, was wont to mingle stones with it, came one day to the pot which with meat in it for his keepers dinner was seething over the fire, and filled it up with ashes. These are but particular effects: But that which all the world hath seene, and all men know, which is, that in all the armies that came out of the East, their chiefest strength consisted in their Elephants by whom they reaped, without comparison, farre greater effects, than now adaies we do by our great Ordnance, which in a manner holds their place in a ranged battel (such as have any knowledge in ancient Histories may easily guesse it to be true)

—*si quidem Tyrio servire solebant*  
*Annibali, et nostris ducibus, regique Molosso*  
*Horum majores, et dorso ferre cohortes,*  
*Partem aliquam belli, et eundem in prælia turmam.*  
—*Juv. Sat. xii. 107.*

Their elders usde great *Hannibal* to steed  
Our Leaders, and *Molossian* Kings at need,  
And on their backe to beare strong-guarding Knights,  
Part of the warre, and troupes addrest to fights.

A man must needs rest assured of the confidence they had in these beasts, and of their discourse, yeelding the front of a battel unto them; where the least stay they could have made, by reason of

## THE SECOND BOOKE

the hugenesse and weight of their bodies, and the least amazement that might have made them turne head upon their owne men, had bin sufficient to lose all. And few examples have been noted, that ever it fortun'd they turned upon their owne troupes, whereas we head-long throng one upon another, and so are put to rout: They had charge given them, not onely of one simple moving, but of many and severall parts in the combat: As the Spaniards did to their dogges in their new conquest of the *Indias*, to whom they gave wages, and imparted their booties; which beasts shewed as much dexteritie in pursuing, and judgement in staying their victorie, in charging, or retreating, and as occasion served in distinguishing their friends from their enemies, as they did earnestnesse and eagernes: we rather admire and consider strange than common things: without which I should never so long have ammused my selfe about this tedious catalogue. For, in my judgement he that shall neerely checke, what we ordinarily see in those beasts that live amongst us, shall in them finde as wonderful effects, as those, which with so much toile are collected in far countries and passed ages. It is one same nature, which stil doth keep her course. He that thoroughly should judge her present estate, might safely conclude, both what shall happen, and what is past. I have seene amongst us, men brought by sea from distant countries, whose language, because we could in no wise understand, and that their fashions, their countenance, and their clothes did altogether differ from ours; who of us did not deeme them brutish and savage? who did not impute their mutenesse unto stupiditie or beastlines, and to see them ignorant of the French tongue, of our kissing the hands, of our low-lowting courtesies, of our behaviour and carriage, by which, without contradiction, humane

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

ER nature ought to take her patterne? Whatsoever seemeth strange unto us, and we understand not, we blame and condemne. The like befalleth us in our judging of beasts. They have diverse qualities, which somewhat simbolize with ours: from which, we may comparatively draw some conjecture, but of such as are peculiar unto them, what know wee what they are? Horses, Dogges, Oxen, Sheepe, Birds, and the greater number of sensitive creatures that live amongst us, know our voyce, and by it suffer themselves to be directed. So did the Lamprey which *Crassus* had, and came to him when he called it; so do the Eeles that breed in *Arethusaes* fountaine. And my selfe have seene some fishponds, where, at a certaine crie of those that kept them, the fish would presently come to shoare, where they were wont to be fed.

—*nomen habent, et ad magistri  
Vocem quisque sui venit citatus.*

—MART. iv. *Epig.* xxx. 6.

They have their proper names, and every one Comes at his masters voyce, as call'd upon.

By which we may judge, and conclude, that Elephants have some apprehension of religion, forsomuch as after diverse washings and purifications, they are seene to lift up their truncke, as we doe our armes, and at certaine houres of the day, without any instruction, of their owne accord, holding their eyes fixed towards the Sunne-rising, fall into a long meditating contemplation: yet, because wee see no such apparence in other beasts, may wee rightly conclude, that they are altogether void of religion, and may not take that in payment, which is hidden from us. As we perceive something in that action, which the Philosopher *Cleanthes* well observed, because it somewhat drawes



## THE SECOND BOOKE

neere unto ours. He saw (as himselfe reporteth) a company of Emmets goe from their nest, bearing amongst them the body of a dead Ant, toward another Emmets nest, from which many other Ants came, as it were to meet them by the way to parly with them, who after they had continued together awhile, they which came last, returned backe, to consult (as you may imagine) with their fellow-citizens, and because they could hardly come to any capitulation; they made two or three voyages to and fro: In the end, the last come, brought unto the other a worme from their habitation, as for a ransome of the dead, which worme the first company tooke upon their backes, and carried it home, leaving the dead body unto the other. Loe here the interpretation that *Cleanthes* gave it: Witnessing thereby, that those creatures which have no voice at all, have neverthesse mutual commerce, and interchangeable communication, whereof if we be not partakers, it is onely our fault; and therefore doe we fondly to censure it. And they yet produce divers other effects, farre surpassing our capacity, and so farre out of the reach of our imitation, that even our thoughts are unable to conceive them. Many hold opinion, that in the last and famous sea-fight, which *Antonie* lost against *Augustus*, his Admirall-gally was in her course staid by that little fish, the Latines call *Remora*, and the English a Sucke-stone, whose property is, to stay any ship he can fasten himselfe unto. And the Emperour *Caligula*, sailing with a great fleet along the coast of *Romania*, his owne Gally was suddenly staid by such a fish, which he caused to be taken sticking fast to the keele, moodily raging, that so little a creature had the power to force both sea and winde, and the violence of all his oares, onely with her bill sticking to his Gally (for it is a kinde of shell-fish) and was much more amazed when he per-

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

ceived the fish, being brought aboard his ship, to have no longer that powerfull vertue, which it had, being in the Sea. A certaine Citizen of *Cyzicum*, whilom purchased unto himselfe the reputation to be an excellent Mathematician, because he had learn't the quality of the Hedge-hogge, whose property is to build his hole or denne, open diverse waies, and toward severall winds, and fore-seeing rising stormes, he presently stoppeth the holes that way; which thing the foresaid Citizen heedfully observing, would in the City foretell any future storme, and what wind should blow. The Cameleon taketh the colour of the place wherein he is. The fish called a Pourcontrell, or Maniefeit, changeth himselfe into what colour he lists, as occasion offereth it selfe; that so he may hide himselfe from what he feareth, and catch what he seeketh for. In the Cameleon it is a change proceeding of passion, but in the Pourcontrell a change in action; we our selves doe often change our colour, and alter our countenance, through sudden feare, choler, shame, and such like violent passions, which are wont to alter the hew of our faces: but it is by the effect of sufferance, as in the Cameleon. The jaundise hath power to make us yelow, but it is not in the disposition of our wils. The effects we perceive in other creatures, greater than ours, witnesse some more excellent faculty in them, which is concealed from us, as it is to be supposed, diverse others of their conditions and forces are, whereof no apparance or knowledge commeth to us. Of all former prædictions, the ancientest and most certaine were such as were drawn from the flight of birds: we have nothing equall unto it, nor so admirable. The rule of fluttering, and order of shaking their wings, by which they conjecture the consequences of things to ensue, must necessarily be directed to so noble an operation by some excellent and supernaturall meane:



## THE SECOND BOOKE

For, it is a wresting of the letter, to attribute so wondrous effects, to any naturall decree, without the knowledge, consent, or discourse of him that causeth and produceth them, and is a most false opinion: Which to prove, the Torpedo or Cramp-fish hath the property to benumme and astonish, not onely the limbs of those that touch it, but also theirs, that with any long pole or fishing line touch any part thereof, shee doth transmit and convey a kinde of heaue numming into the hands of those that stirre or handle the same: Moreover, it is averred, that if any matter be cast upon them, the astonishment is sensibly felt to gaine upward untill it come to the hands, and even through the water it astonisheth the feeling-sence. Is not this a wonderfull power? Yet is it not altogether unprofitable for the Cramp-fish, she both knowes and makes use of it: for to catch prey she pursueth, she is seene to hide herselfe under the mud, that, other fishes swimming over her, stricken and benumbed with her exceeding coldnesse, may fall into her claws. The Cranes, Swallowes, and other wandering birds, changing their abode, according to the seasons of the yeare, shew evidently the knowledge they have of their fore-divining faculty, and often put the same in use. Hunters assure us, that to chuse the best dog, and which they purpose to keepe from out a litter of other young whelps, there is no better meane than the damme herselfe: for, if they be removed from out their kennell, him that she first brings thither againe, shall alwaies prove the best; or if one but encompassse her kennell with fire, looke which of her whelps she first seeketh to save, is undoubtedly the best: whereby it appeareth, they have a certaine use of Prognosticating, that we have not; or else some hidden vertue, to judge of their young ones, different and more lively than ours. The manner of all beasts breeding, engendering, nourishing, working,

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

moving, living, and dying, being so neere to ours, what ever we abridge from their moving causes, and adde to our condition above theirs, can no way depart from our reasons discourse. For a regiment of our health, Physitions propose the example of beasts manner of life and proceeding unto us: for this common saying is alwaies in the peoples mouth:

*Tenez chauds les pieds et la teste,  
Au demeurant vivez en beste.*

—Joub. Err. Pop. pur. ii. pag. 140.

Keepe warme (t'is meete) thy head and feete:  
In all the rest, live like a beast.

Generation is the chiefest naturall action: we have a certaine disposition of some members, fittest for that purpose; neverthelesse, they bid us range our selves unto a brutish situation and disposition, as most effectuall:

—*more ferarum,  
Quadrupedumque magis ritu, plerumque putantur  
Concipere uxores: quia sic loca sumere possunt,  
Pectoribus positis, sublatis semina lumbis.*—LUCR. iv. 1256.

And reject those indiscreet and insolent motions, which women have so luxuriously found out, as hurtfull: conforming them to the example and use of beasts of their sex, as more modest and considerate.

*Nam mulier prohibet se concipere, atque repugnat,  
Clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si læta retractet,  
Atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus,  
Ejicit enim sulci recta regione viaque  
Vomerem, atque locis avertit seminis ictum.*

—*Ibid.* 1260.

If it be justice to give every one his due, beasts which serve, love, and defend their benefactors, pursue and outrage strangers, and such as offend them, by so doing they represent some shew of

## THE SECOND BOOKE

our justice, as also in reserving a high kinde of equality in dispensing of what they have to their young-ones. Touching friendship, without all comparison, they professe it more lively and shew it more constantly, than men. *Hircanus* a dog of *Lysimachus* the King, his master being dead, without eating or drinking would never come from off his bed, and when the dead corps was removed thence, he followed it, and lastly flung himselfe into the fire, where his master was burned. As did also the dogge of one called *Pyrrhus*, who after he was dead, would never budge from his masters couch, and when he was removed, suffered himselfe to be carried away with him, and at last flung himselfe into the fire wherein his master was consumed. There are certaine inclinations of affection, which without counsell of reason arise somtimes in us, proceeding of a casuall temerity, which some call *Sympathie*: beasts as wel as men are capable of it. We see horses take a kinde of acquaintance one of another, so that often, traveling by the high-way, or feeding together, we have much ado to keep them asunder, wee see them bend and applie their affections to some of their fellowes colours, as if it were upon a certaine visage; and when they meet with any such, with signes of joy, and demonstration of good will, to joine and accost them, and to hate and shunne some other formes and colours. Beasts, as well as wee, have choice in their loves, and are very nice in chusing of their mates. They are not altogether void of our extreme and unappesable jealousies. Lustfull desires are either naturall, and necessary, as eating and drinking; or else naturall and not necessary, as the acquaintance of males and females; or else neither necessary nor naturall: Of this last kinde are almost all mens: For, they are all superfluous and artificiall. It is

CHAPTER  
XII  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

wonderfull to see with how little nature will be satisfied, and how little she hath left for us to be desired. The preparations in our kitchins, doe nothing at all concerne her lawes. The Stoikes say, that a man might very well sustaine himselfe with one Olive a day. The delicacy of our wines, is no part of her lesson, no more is the surcharge and relishing, which we adde unto our lecherous appetites.

—*neque illa*

*Magno prognatum deposcit consule cunnum.*

—HOR. Ser. i. Sat. ii. 30.

These strange lustfull longings, which the ignorance of good, and a false opinion have possest us with, are in number so infinite, that in a manner they expell all those which are naturall: even as if there were so many strangers in a City, that should either banish and expell all the naturall inhabitants thereof, or utterly suppress their ancient power and authority, and absolutely usurping the same, take possession of it. Brute beasts are much more regulare than we; and with more moderation containe themselves within the compasse, which nature hath prescribed them: yet not so exactly, but that they have some coherency with our riotous licenciousnesse. And even as there have beene found certaine furious longings and unnaturall desires, which have provoked men unto the love of beasts, so have diverse times some of them beene drawne to love us, and are possessed with monstrous affections from one kind to another: witnesse the Elephant, that in the love of an herb-wife, in the city of *Alexandria*, was co-rivall with *Aristophanes*, the Grammarian; who in all offices pertayning to an earnest woer and passionate suiter, yeelded nothing unto him: For, walking thorow the Fruit-market, he would here and there snatch up



## THE SECOND BOOKE

some with his truncke, and carry them unto her: as neere as might be he would never loose the sight of her: and now and then over her band put his truncke into her bosome, and feele her breasts. They also report of a Dragon, that was exceedingly in love with a young maiden; and of a Goose in the City of *Asope*, which dearly loved a young childe: also of a Ram that belonged to the Musitian *Glausia*. Doe we not daily se Munkies ragingly in love with women, and furiously to pursue them? And certaine other beasts, given to love the males of their owne sex? *Oppianus* and others report some examples, to shew the reverence, and manifest the awe, some beasts in their marriages, beare unto their kindred: but experience makes us often see the contrary:

CHAPTER  
XII  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*ne habetur turpe iuvenca  
Ferre patrem tergo: sit equo sua filia coniux:  
Quasque creavit, iuit pecudus caper: ipsaque cuius  
Semine concepta est ex illo concipit ales.*  
—OVID, *Metam.* x. 325.

To beare her Sire the Heifer shameth not:  
The Horse takes his owne Fillies maiden-head:  
The Goat gets them with young whom he begot:  
Birds breed by them, by whom themselves were bred.

Touching a subtil pranke and witty tricke, is there any so famous as that of *Thales* the Philosophers Mule, which, laden with salt, passing thorow a River chanced to stumble, so that the sacks she carried were all wet, and perceiving the salt (because the water had melted it) to grow lighter, ceased not, assoone as she came neere any water, together with her load to plunge herselfe therein, untill her master, being aware of her craft, commanded her to be laden with wooll, which being wet became heavier; the Mule finding herselfe deceived, used her former policy no more. There are many

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

of them, that lively represent the visage of our avarice, who with a greedy kinde of desire endeavour to surprise whatsoever comes within their reach, and though they reap no commodity, nor have any use of it, to hide the same very curiously. As for husbandry, they exceede us, not onely in foresight to spare, and gather together for times to come, but have also many parts of the skill belonging there unto. As the Ants, when they perceive their corne to grow mustie, and graine to be sowre, for feare it should rot and putrifie, spread the same abroad before their neasts, that so it may aire and drie. But the caution they use in gnawing, and prevention they imploy in paring their graines of wheat, is beyond all imagination of mans wit: Because wheat doth not alwaies keepe drie nor wholesome, but moisten, melt and dissolve into a kinde of whey, namely, when it beginneth to bud, fearing it should turne to seed, and lose the nature of a storehouse, for their sustenance, they part and gnaw-off the end whereat it wons to bud. As for warre, which is the greatest and most glorious of all humane actions, I would faine know, if we will use it for an argument of some prerogative, or otherwise for a testimonie of our imbecilitie and imperfection, as in truth, the science we use to defeat and kill one another, to spoile and utterly to overthrow our owne kinde, it seemeth, it hath not much to make it selfe to be wished-for in beasts, that have it not.

—quando leoni

*Fortior eripuit vitam leo, quo nemore unquam  
Espiravit aper maioris dentibus apri?*

—JUVEN. Sat. xv. 160.

When hath a greater Lion damnifide  
A Lions life? in what wood ever di'de,  
A boare by tusks and gore,  
Of any greater boare?

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Yet are not they altogether exempted from it: wit-  
nesse the furious encounters of Bees, and the hostile  
enterprises of the Princes and Leaders of the two  
contrary Armies.

CHAPTER  
XII  
—  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*serpe duobus*

*Regibus incessit magno discordia motu,  
Continuoque animos vulgi et trepidantis bello  
Corda licet longe praeiacere.*—VIRG. *Georg.* iv. 67.

OF-times twixt two no great Kings great dissention  
With much adoe doth set them at contention;  
The vulgare mindes strait may you see from farre,  
And hearts that tremble at the thought of warre.

I never marke this divine description, but mee  
thinkes I read humane foolishnesse and worldly  
vanitie painted in it. For, these motions of warre,  
which out of their horror and astonishment breed  
this tempest of cries, and clang of sounds in us:

*Fulgor ubi ad caelum se tollit, totaque circum  
Ære renidescit tellus, subterque virum vi  
Excitur pedibus sonitus, clamoreque montes  
Icti rejectant voces ad sidera mundi.*—LUCR. ii. 326.

Where lightning raiseth it selfe to the skies,  
The earth shines round with armour, soundes doe rise  
By mens force under feet, wounded with noyse  
The hilles to heav'n reverberate their voyce.

This horror-causing array of so many thousands  
of armed men, so great furie, earnest fervor, and  
undaunted courage, it would make one laugh to see  
by how many vaine occasions it is raised and set on  
fire, and by what light meanes it is againe suppressed  
and extinct.

—*Paridis propter narratur amorem  
Græcia Barbariarum dirum collisa duello.*

—HOM. i. *Epist.* ii. 6.

For Paris lustfull love (as Stories tell)  
All Greece to direfull warre with Asia fell.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

The hatred of one man, a spight, a pleasure, a familiar suspect, or a jealousy; causes, which ought not to move two scolding fish-wives to scratch one another, is the soule and motive of all this hurly-burly. Shall we beleeve them that are the principall authors and causes therof? Let us but hearken unto the greatest and most victorious Emperour, and the mightiest that ever was, how pleasantly he laughs, and wittily he plaies, at so many battells and bloody fights, hazarded both by sea and land, at the blood and lives of five hundred thousand soules which followed his fortune, and the strength and riches of two parts of the world consumed and drawne drie for the service of his enterprise :

*Quod fuit Glaphyran Antonius, hanc mihi poenam  
Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam  
Fulviam ego ut futuam? quid si me Manius oret  
Pædicem, faciam? non puto, si sapiam.  
Aut futue, aut pugnemus ait: quid si mihi vita  
Charior est ipsa mentula? Signa canant.*  
—MART. xi. Epig. xxi.

(I use my Latine somewhat boldly, but it is with that leave which you have given mee,) This vast huge bodie hath so many faces and severall motions which seeme to threat both heaven and earth.

*Quam multi Lybico volvuntur marmore fluctus  
Sævus ubi Orion hybernis conditur undis:  
Vel cum sole novo densæ torrentur aristæ,  
Aut Hermi campo, aut Lyciæ, flaventibus arvis,  
Scuta sonant, pulsuque pedum tremit excita tellus.*  
—VIRG. Æn. vii. 717.

As many waves, as rowle in Affricke marble-sounds,  
When fiere Oryon hides in Winter waves his head:  
Or when thicke-eares of Corne are parch't by Sunne  
new-spred.  
In *Hermus* fruitfull fields, or *Lycæes* yellow grounds,  
With noyse of shields and feet, the trembling earth  
so sounds.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*This many-headed, divers-armed, and furiously-  
raging-monster, is man; wretched weake and miser-  
able man: whom if you consider well, what is he, but  
a crawling, and ever-moving Ants-neast?*

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Il nigrum campis agmen.*—VIRG. *Æn.* iv. 404.

The sable-coloured band,  
Marches along the Land,

A gust of contrarie winds, the croking of a flight of Ravens, the false pase of a Horse, the casual flight of an Eagle, a dreame, a sodaine voyce, a false signe, a mornings mist, an evening fogge, are enough to overthrow, sufficient to overwhelme and able to pull him to the ground. Let the Sunne but shine hot upon his face, hee faints and swelters with heat: Cast but a little dust in his eyes, as to the Bees mentioned by our Poet, all our ensignes, all our legions, yea great *Pompey* himselfe in the forefront of them is overthrowne and put to rout (For as I remember it was he whom *Sertorius* vanquished in *Spaine*, with all those goodly armes.) This also served *Eumenes* against *Antigonus*, and *Surena* against *Crassus*:

*Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,  
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent.*

—VIRG. *Georg.* iv. 86.

These stomacke-motions, these contentions great,  
[Calm'd] with a little dust, strait lose their heat.

Let us but uncouple some of our ordinarie flies, and let loose a few gnats amongst them, they shall have both the force to scatter, and courage to consume him. The Portugals not long since beleagring the City of *Tamly*, in the territory of *Xiatine*, the inhabitants thereof, brought great store of Hives, (whereof they have plentie) upon their walls: And with fire drove them so forcible upon their enemies, who as unable to abide their assaults, and endure

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

their stings, left their enterprize. Thus by this new kinde of helpe was the liberty of the Towne gained, and victory purchased; with so happy successe, that in their retreating, there was not one townes-man found wanting. *The soules of Emperours and Coblers are all cast in one same mould.* Considering the importance of Princes actions, and their weight, wee perswade our selves, they are brought forth by some as weighty and important causes; wee are deceived: They are moved, stirred and removed in their motions, by the same springs and wards, that wee are in ours. The same reason that makes us chide and braule, and fall out with any of our neighbours, causeth a warre to follow betweene Princes; The same reason that makes us whip or beat a lackey, maketh a Prince (if hee apprehend it) to spoyle and waste a whole Province. *They have as easie a will as we, but they can doe much more.* Alike desires perturbe both a skinne-worme, and an Elephant. *Touching trust and faithfulnessse there is no creature in the world so trecherous as man.* Our histories report the earnest pursuit and sharpe chase, that some Dogges have made for the death of their masters. King *Pirrhus* finding a Dog, that watched a dead man, and understanding he had done so three daies and nights together, commanded the corps to be enterred, and tooke the Dog along with him. It fortun'd one day (as *Pirrhus* was survaying the General Musters of his Army) the Dog perceiving in that multitude, the man who had murthered his maister, loud-barking, and with great rage ran furiously upon him; by which signes he furthered and procured his masters revenge, which by way of justice, was shortly executed. Even so did the Dogge belonging to *Hesiodus*, surnamed the wise, having convicted the children of *Ganister* of *Naupactus*, of the murther committed on his Masters person. Another Dogge



## THE SECOND BOOKE

being appointed to watch a Temple in *Athens*, having perceived a sacrilegious theefe, to carrie away the fairest jewels therein, barked at him so long as he was able, and seeing he could not awaken the Sextons or Temple-keepers, followed the theefe, whither-soever he went; daie-light being come, he kept himselfe a loof-off, but never lost the sight of him: if he offered him meat, he utterly refused it; but if any passenger chanced to come by, on them he fawned, with wagging his taile, and tooke what-ever they offered him; If the theefe staid to rest himselfe, he also stayed in the same place: The newes of this Dogge being come to the Temple-keepers, they as they went along, enquiring of the Dogs haire and colour, pursued his tracke so long, that at last they found both the Dog and the theefe in the Citie of *Cromyon*, whom they brought backe to *Athens*, where for his offence he was severely punished. And the judges in acknowledgement of the Dogges good office, at the Cities charge appointed him for his sustenance a certaine daily measure of Corne, and enjoyned the Priests of the Temple, carefully to looke unto him. *Plutarke* affirmeth this storie to be most true, and to have hapned in his time. Touching gratitude and thankfulness, (for me thinks we have need to further this word greatly) this onely example shall suffice, of which *Appion* reporteth to have been a spectator himselfe. One day (saith he) that the Senate of *Rome*, (to please and recreate the common people) caused a great number of wilde beasts to be baited, namely huge great Lions, it so fortun'd, that there was one amongst the rest, who by reason of his furious and stately carriage, of his unmatched strength, of his great limbs, and of his loud, and terror-causing roaring, drew all by-standers eyes to gaze upon him. Amongst other slaves, that in sight

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

of all the people were presented to encounter with these beasts, there chanced to be one *Androdus* of *Dacia*, who belonged unto a Roman Lord, who had been Consull. This huge Lion, having eyed him afar off, first made a suddaine stop, as stricken into a kind of admiration, then with a milde and gentle countenance, as if he would willingly have taken acquaintance of him, faire and softly approached unto him: Which done, and resting assured he was the man he tooke him for, begun fawningly to wagge his taile, as dogges doe that fawne upon their new-found masters, and licke the poore and miserable slaves hands and thighes, who through feare was almost out of his wits and halfe dead. *Androdus* at last taking hart of grace; and by reason of the Lions mildnesse having rouzed up his spirits, and wisely fixing his eies upon him, to see whether he could call him to remembrance; it was to all beholders a singular pleasure to observe the love, the joy, and blandishments, each endeavored to enter-shew one another. Whereat the people raising a loud crie, and by their shouting and clapping of hands seeming to be much pleased; the Emperour willed the slave to be brought before him, as desirous to understand of him the cause of so strange and seeld-seene an accident: Who related this new, and wonderfull storie unto him.

My Master (said he) being Proconsull in *Affrica*, forsomuch as he caused me every day to be most cruelly beaten, and held me in so rigorous bondage, I was constrained, as being wearie of my life, to run away: And safely to scape from so eminent a person, and who had so great authoritie in the Countrey, I thought it best to get me into the desert, and most unfrequented wildernesses of that region, with a full resolution, if I could not compasse the meanes to sustaine my selfe, to finde one way or other, with



## THE SECOND BOOKE

violence to make my selfe away. One day, the Sunne about noone-tide being extreemly hote, and the scorching heat thereof intolerable, I fortun'd to come unto a wilde-unhanted cave, hidden amongst crags, and almost inaccessible, and where I imagined no footing had ever been; therein I hid my selfe: I had not long been there, but in comes this Lion, with one of his pawes sore hurt, and bloody-goared, wailing for the smart, and groaning for the paine he felt; at whose arrivall, I was much dismaied, but he seeing me lie close-cowering in a corner of his den, gently made his approaches unto me, holding forth his goared paw toward me, and seemed with shewing the same humbly to sue, and suppliantly to beg for help at my hands. I, moved with ruth, taking it into my hand, pulled out a great splint, which was gotten into it, and shaking-off all feare, first I wrung and crusht his sore, and caused the filth and matter, which therein was gathered, to come forth; than, as gently as for my heart I could, I cleansed, wiped, and dried the same. He feeling some ease in his grieve, and his paine to cease, still holding his foot betweene my hands, began to sleep and take some rest. Thence forward he and I lived together, the full space of three yeares in his den, with such meat as he shifted-for: For, what beasts he killed, or what prey soever he tooke, he ever brought home the better part, and shared it with me, which for want of fire, I rosted in the Sunne, and therewith nourished my selfe all that while. But at last wearied with this kinde of brutish life, the Lion being one day gone to purchase his wonted prey, I left the place, hoping to mend my fortunes, and having wandred up and downe three dayes, I was at last taken by certaine Souldiers, which from *Africa* brought me into this Citie to my Master againe, who immediatly condemned me to death, and to be devoured by wilde

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apology  
of Raymond  
Sebond



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

beasts. And as I now perceive, the same Lion was also shortly after taken, who as you see hath now requited me of the good turne I did him, and the health which by my meanes he recovered. Behold here the historie, *Androdus* reported unto the Emperour, which after he caused to be declared unto all the people, at whose generall request, he was forthwith set at libertie, and quit of his punishment, and by the common consent of all, had the Lion bestowed upon him. *Appion* saith further, that *Androdus* was daily seen to lead the Lion up and downe the streets of *Rome*, tied onely with a little twine, and walking from taverne to taverne, received such money as was given him, who would gently suffer himsele to be handled, touched, decked, and strowed with flowers, all over and over, many saying when they met him: yonder is the Lion that is the mans hoste and yonder is the man that is the Lions Physitian. We often mourne and weepe for the losse of those beasts we love, so doe they many times for the losse of us.

*Post bellator equus positus insignibus Æthon  
It lacrimans, guttisque humectat grandibus ora.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* xi. 89.

Next *Æthon* horse of warre, all ornaments laid downe,  
Goes weeping, with great drops bedewe's his cheekes adowne.

As some of our nations have wives in common, and some in severall, each man keeping himsele to his owne; so have some beasts; [yea] some there are, that observe their marriages, with as great respect as we doe ours. Touching the mutuall societie, and reciprocall confederation, which they devise amongst themselves, that so they may be fast combined together, and in times of need help one another, it is apparant, that if Oxen, Hogs, and other beasts being hurt by us, chance to crie, all the heard runnes to aid him, and in his defence will joine all together. The fish, called of the Latines *Scarus*, having swallowed

## THE SECOND BOOKE

the fishers hooke, his fellowes will presently flocke about him, and nibble the line in sunder; and if any of them happen to be taken in a bow-net, some of his fellowes turning his head away, will put his taile in at the neck of the net, who with his teeth fast-holding the same, never leave him, untill they have pulled him out. The Barble fishes, if one of them chance to be engaged, will set the line against their backes, and with a fin they have, toothed like a sharp saw, presently saw and fret the same asunder. Concerning particular offices, which we for the benefit of our life, draw one from an other, many like examples are found amongst them. It is assuredly beleevd, that the Whale never swimmeth, unlesse she have a little fish going before her, as her vantgard, it is in shape like a Gudgeon, and both the Latines and we, call it the Whales-guide; for, she doth ever follow him, suffering her selfe, as easily to be led and turned by him, as a ship is directed and turned by a sterne: for requitall of which good turne, whereas all things else, be it beast, fish, or vessell, that comes within the horrible *Chaos* of this monstrous mouth, is presently lost and devoured; this little fish doth safely retire himselfe therein, and there sleepes verie quietly, and as long as he sleepes, the Whale never stirs; but assoone as he awaketh and goeth his way, where-ever he takes his course she alwaies followeth him, and if she fortune to lose him, she wanders here and there, and often striketh upon the rocks, as a ship that hath nor mast nor rudder. This, *Plutarke* witnesseth to have seen in the Iland of *Antycira*. There is such a like societie betweene the little bird called a Wren, and the Crocodill: For, the Wren serveth as a sentinell to so great a monster: And if the *Ichneumon*, which is his mortall enemy approach to fight with him, the little birdlet, lest he might surprise him whilst he sleepeth, with his singing, and

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apology  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

pecking him with his bill, awakens him, and give him warning of the danger he is in. The bird liveth by the scraps, and feedeth upon the leavings of that monster, who gently receiveth him into his mouth and suffers him to pecke his jawes and teeth for such mamockes of flesh as sticke betweene them: and if he purpose to close his mouth, he doth first warne him to be gone, faire and easie closing it by little and little, without any whit crushing or hurting him. The shell-fish called a Nacre, liveth even so with the Pinnotere, which is a little creature like unto a Crabfish, and as his porter or usher waits upon him, attending the opening of the Nacre, which he continually keepe gaping, untill he see some little fish enter it, fit for their turne, then he creepes into the Nacre, and leaves not pinching his quicke flesh, untill he makes him close his shell, and so they both together fast in their hold, devour their prey. In the manner of the Tunnies life, may be discovered a singular knowledge of the three parts of the Mathematices. First for Astrologie, it may well be said that man doth learne it of them: For, wheresoever the winter Solstitium doth take them, there do they stay themselves, and never stir till the next Æquinoctium, and that is the reason why *Aristotle* doth so willingly ascribe that art unto them: Then for Geometrie and Arithmetike, they alwaies frame the shole of a Cubike figure, every way square: and so forme a solide, close and wel-ranged battailon, enclosed compassed round about of six equall sides. Thus orderly marshaled, they take their course and swim whither their journey tends, as broad and wide behind as before: So that he that seeth and tellet but one ranke, may easily number all the troop forsomuch as the number of the depth is equall unto the bredth, and the bredth unto the length. Touching magnanimitie and haughtie courage, it



## THE SECOND BOOKE

hard to set it forth more lively, and to produce a rarer patterne, than that of the Dog, which from *India* was sent unto *Alexander*: to whom was first presented a Stag, then a wilde Boare, and then a Beare, with each of which he should have foughten, but he seemed to make no accompt of them, and would not so much as remove out of his place for them, but when he saw a Lion, he presently rouzed himselfe, shewing evidently he meant onely so noble a beast worthie to enter combat with him. Concerning repentance and acknowledging of faults committed, it is reported, that an Elephant having through rage of choler slaine his governour, conceived such an extreme inward griefe, that he would never afterward touch any food, and suffered himself to pine to death. Touching clemencie, it is reported of a Tiger, (the fiercest and most inhumane beast of all) who having a Kid given her to feed upon, endured the force of gnawing hunger, two daies together, rather than she would hurt him; the third day with maine strength she brake the cage, wherein she was kept-pent, and went elsewhere to shift for feeding; as one unwilling to seize upon the seelie Kid her familiar and guest. And concerning privileges of familiaritie and sympathie caused by conversation, is it not oft seen, how some make Cats, Dogs, and Hares so tame, so gentle, and so milde, that without harming one another they shall live and continue together? But that which experience teacheth sea-faring men, especially those that come into the seas of *Sicilie*, of the qualitie and condition of the Halcyon bird, or as some call it Alcedo or Kings-fisher, exceeds all mens conceit. In what kinde of creature did ever nature so much prefer both their hatching, sitting, brooding, and birth? Poets faine, that the Iland of *Delos*, being before wandring and fleeting up and downe, was for the

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

delivery of *Latona* made firme and settled. But Gods decree hath been, that all the watrie wilderness should be quiet and made calme, without raine, wind, or tempest, during the time the *Halcyon* sitteth and bringeth forth her young-ones, which is much about the Winter *Solstitium*, and shortest day in the yeare: By whose privilege even in the hart and deadeest time of Winter we have seven calme daies, and as many nights to saile without any danger. Their Hens know no other Cocke but their owne: They never forsake him all the daies of their life; and if the Cocke chance to be weake and crazed, the Hen will take him upon her neck, and carrie him with her, wheresoever she goeth, and serve him even untill death. Mans wit could never yet attaine to the full knowledge of that admirable kind of building or structure, which the *Halcyon* useth in contriving of her neast, no, nor devise what it is-of.

*Plutarke*, who hath seen and handled many of them, thinkes it to be made of certaine fish-bones, which she so compacts, and conjoyneth together, enterlacing some long, and some crosse-waies, adding some foldings and roundings to it, that in the end she frameth a round kind of vessel, readie to float and swim upon the water: which done, she carrieth the same where the Sea-waves beat most; there the Sea gently beating upon it, shewes her how to daube and patch up the parts not well closed, and how to strengthen those places, and fashion those ribs, that are not fast, but stir with the Sea-waves: And on the other side, that which is closely wrought, the Sea beating on it, doth so fasten and conjoyne together, that nothing, no, not stone or yron, can any way loosen, divide, or break the same, except with great violence; and what is most to be wondred at, is the proportion and figure of the concavitie within; for, it is so composed and pro-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

portioned, that it can receive or admit no manner of thing, but the Bird that built it; for, to all things else, it is so impenetrable, close and hard, that nothing can possible enter in: no, not so much as the Sea-water. Loe here a most plaine description of this building, or construction taken from a verie good Author: yet me thinks, it doth not fully and sufficiently resolve us of the difficultie in this kinde of Architecture. *Now from what vanitie can it proceed, we should so willfully contemne, and disdainfully interpret those effects, which we can neither imitate nor conceive?* But to follow this equalitie or correspondencie betweene us and beasts somewhat further; the privilege whereof our soule vants to bring to her condition whatsoever it conceiveth, and to dispoile what of mortall and corporall qualities belongs unto it, to marshall those things, which she deemed worthie her acquaintance, to disrobe and deprive their corruptible conditions, and to make them leave as superfluous and base garments, thicknesse, length, depth, weight, colour, smell, roughnesse, smoothnesse, hardnesse, softnesse, and all sensible accidents else, to fit and appropriate them to her immortall and spirituall condition: so that *Rome* and *Paris*, which I have in my soule; *Paris* which I imagine; yea, I imagine and conceive the same without greatnesse and place, without stone and morter, and without wood; Then say I unto my selfe, the same privilege seemeth likewise to be in beasts: for, a Horse accustomed to heare the sound of trumpets, the noyse of shot, and the clattering of armes, whom we see to snort, to startle, and to neigh in his sleep, as he lies along upon his litter, even as he were in the hurly-burly; it is most certaine, that in his minde he apprehends the sound of a Drum without any noyse, and an armie without armes or bodie.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Quippe videbis equos fortes, cum membra jacebunt  
In sonnis, sudare tamen, spirareque sæpe,  
Et quasi de palma summas contendere vires.*

—Lucr. iv. 982.

You shall see warlike Horses, when in sleep  
Their limbs lie, yet sweat, and a snorting keep,  
And stretch their utmost strength,  
As for a goale at length.

That Hare, which a grey-hound imagineth in his  
dreame, after whom as he sleepeth we see him bay,  
quest, yelp, and snort, stretch out his taile, shake his  
legs, and perfectly represent the motions of his course;  
the same is a Hare without bones, without haire.

*Venantunque canes in molli sæpe quiete,  
Jactant crura tamen subito, vocesque repente  
Mittunt, et crebras reddunt naribus auras,  
Ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum:  
Expergefactique, sequuntur inania sæpæ  
Cervorum simulacra, fugæ quasi dedita cernant:  
Douce discussis redeant erroribus ad se.* —Ibid. 986.

Oft times the hunters dogs in easie rest  
Stir their legs, suddainly, open, and quest,  
And send from nostrils thicke-thicke snuffing sent,  
As if on traile they were of game full-bent:  
And wakened so, they follow shadowes vaine  
Of Deere in chase, as if they fled amaine:  
Till, their fault left, they turne to sense againe.

Those watching-Dogs, which in their sleep we  
sometimes see to grumble, and then barking to  
startle suddainly out of their slumber, as if they  
perceived some stranger to arive: that stranger which  
their minde seemeth to see, is but an imaginarie  
man, and not perceived; without any dimension,  
colour, or being:

*—Consueti domi catulorum blanda propago  
Degere, sæpe levem ex oculis volucremque soporem  
Discutere, et corpus de terra corripere instant,  
Proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur.*

—Ibid. 993.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

The fawning kinde of whelps, at home that liv's,  
From eyes to shake light-swift sleepe often striv's,  
And from the ground their starting bodies hie,  
As if some unknowne stranger they did spie.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Touching corporall beautie, before I goe any further, it were necessarie I knew whether we are yet agreed about her description. It is very likely that we know not well, what beautie either in nature, or in generall is, since we give so many, and attribute so divers formes to humane beautie, yea, and to our beautie: Of which if there were any naturall or lively description, we should generally know it, as we doe the heat of fire. We imagine and faine her formes, as our fantasies lead us.

*Turpis Romano Belgicus ore color.*

—PROPER. II. *El.* xviii. 26.

A Dutch-froes colour hath no grace,  
Seen in a Romane Ladies face.

The Indians describe it blacke and swarthy, with blabbered-thick lips, with a broad and flat nose, the inward gristle whereof they loade with great gold-rings, hanging downe to their mouth, and their neather lips with great circlets beset with precious stones, which cover all their chins, deeming it an especiall grace to shew their teeth to the roots. In *Peru*, the greatest eares are ever esteemed the fairest, which with all art and industrie, they are continually stretching out; and a man (who yet liveth) sweareth to have seen in a Province of the East-Indias the people so carefull to make them great, and so to load them with heavie jewels, that at ease he could have thrust his arme through one of their eare-holes. There are other Nations, who endeavour to make their teeth as blacke as Jeat, and skorne to have them white; and in other places they die them red. Not onely in the province of *Baske*,



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

but in other places, women are accounted faire when their heads are shaven; and which is strange in some of the Northerly frozen-countries, as *Plato* affirmeth. Those of *Mexico*, esteeme the littlenesse of their foreheads, as one of the chiefest beauties; and whereas they shave their haire over all their bodie besides, by artificiall meanes they labour to nourish and make it grow onely in their forehead, and so love to have great dugs, that they strive to have their children sucke over their shoulders. So would we set forth our favordnesse. The Italianes proportion it big and plum; The Spaniards spare and lanke, and amongst us one would have a white, another browne, one soft and delicate, and another strong and lustie: some desire wantonnesse and blithnesse, and othersome sturdinesse and majestie be joyned with it. Even as the preheminence of beautie, which *Plato* ascribeth unto the Spherical figure, the Epicurians refer the same unto the Round or Square; and say they cannot swaie that a God made round like a bowle. But howsoever it is, nature hath no more privileged us in this than in other things, concerning her common law. And if we impartially enter into judgement of our selves, we shall finde, that if there be any creature or beast lesse favoured in that than we, there are others (and that in great numbers) to whom nature hath been more favourable than to us. *multis animalibus decore vincimur. We are excelled in comelinesse, by many living creatures:* Yea, of the restriall creatures, that live with us. For, concerning those of the Sea, omitting their figure, which no proportion can containe, so much doth it differ, both in colour, in neatnesse, in smoothnesse, and in distinction, we must give place unto them: which in other qualities we must likewise doe to the ayrie creatures. And that prerogative, which Poets yeeld unto



## THE SECOND BOOKE

upright stature, looking towards heaven whence her  
beginning is, CHAPTER  
XII

*Præque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,  
Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque videre  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—OVID, *Métam.* i. 84.

Where other creatures on earth looke and lie,  
A loftie looke God gave man, bade him prie  
On heav'n, rais'd his high count'nance to the skie.

is meere poeeticall, for, there are many little beasts,  
that have their sight directly fixed towards heaven:  
I finde the Camels and the Estridges necke much  
more raised and upright, than ours. What beasts  
have not their face aloft and before, and looke not  
directly opposite, as we; and in their naturall posture  
descrie not as much of heaven and earth, as man  
doth? And what qualities of our corporall consti-  
tution, both in *Plato* and *Cicero* cannot fit and serve  
a thousand beasts? Such as most resemble man are  
the vilest and filthiest of all the rout: As for out-  
ward apparence and true shape of the visage, it is  
the Munkie or Ape:

*Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis!*  
—Cic. *Nat. Deo.* i. Enni.

An Ape, a most ill-favored beast,  
How like to us in all the rest?

as for inward and vitall parts, it is the Hog. Truly,  
when I consider man all naked (yea, be it in that sex,  
which seemeth to have and challenge the greatest  
share of eye-pleasing beautie) and view his defects,  
his naturall subjection, and manifold imperfections:  
I finde we have had much more reason to hide and  
cover our nakednesse, than any creature else. We  
may be excused for borrowing those which nature  
had therein favored more than us, with their beauties  
to adorne us, and under their spoiles of wooll, of

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

haire, of feathers, and of silke to shroud us. Let us moreover observe, that man is the onely creature, whose wants offends his owne fellowes, and he alone that in naturall actions must withdraw and sequester himselfe from those of his owne kinde. Verely it is an effect worthie consideration, that the skilfullest masters of amorous dalliances appoint for a remedie of venerian passions, a free and full survey of the bodie, which one longeth and seeks-after: and that to coole the longing and aswage the heat of friendship, one need but perfectly view and thoroughly consider what he loveth.

*Ille quod obscenas in aperto corpore partes  
Fiderat, in cursu qui fuit, hæsit amor.*

—OVID, *Rem. Am.* ii. 33.

The love stood still, that ran in full carriere,  
When bare it saw parts that should not appeare.

And although this remedie may haply proceed from a squeamish and cold humor: yet it is a wonderfull signe of our imbecillitie, that the use and knowledge should so make us to be cloyd one of an other. It is not bashfulnesse so much, as art and foresight makes our Ladies so circumspect and unwilling to let us come into their closets before they are fully readie, and thoroughly painted, to come abroad, and shew themselves:

*Nec veneres nostras hoc fallit quo magis ipsæ  
Omnia sumopere hos vitæ postscenia celant,  
Quos retinere volunt adstrictoque esse in amore.*

—LUCR. iv. 1176.

Our Mistresses know this, which mak's them not disclose  
Parts to be plaid within, especially from those  
Whom they would servants hold, and in their love-bands close.

Whereas in other creatures, there is nothing but we love, and pleaseth our senses: so that even from their excrements and ordure, we draw not only

## THE SECOND BOOKE

dainties to eat, but our richest ornaments and perfumes. This discourse of beautie toucheth only our common order, and is not so sacrilegious as it intendeth or dareth to comprehend those divine, supernaturall, and extraordinarie beauties, which sometimes are seen to shine amongst us, even as stars under a corporall and terrestriall veile. Moreover, that part of natures favours, which we impart unto beasts, is by our owne confession much more advantageous unto them. We assume unto our selves imaginarie and fantastickall goods, future and absent goods, which humane capacitie can no way warrant unto her selfe; or some other, which by the overweening of our owne opinion, we falsly ascribe unto our selves; as reason, honour, and knowledge; and to them as their proper share we leave the essentiall, the manageable, and palpable goods, as peace, rest, securitie, innocencie, and health: Health I say, which is the goodliest and richest present, nature can impart unto us. So that even Stoike Philosophie dareth to affirme, that if *Heracletus* and *Pherecydes* could have changed their wisdom with health, and by that meanes, the one to have rid himselfe of the dropsie, and the other of the lowsie-evill, which so sore tormented them, they would surely have done it: whereby they also yeeld so much more honor unto wisdom, by comparing and counterpeizing the same unto health, than they do in this other proposition of theirs, where they say, that if *Circes* had presented *Ulissee* with two kinds of drinke, the one to turne a wiseman into a foole, the other to change a foole into a wiseman, he would rather have accepted that of folly, than have been pleased, that *Circes* should transforme his humane shape into a beasts. And they say, that wisdom her selfe would thus have spoken unto him: *Meddle not with me, but leave me rather than thou shouldst*

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*place me under the shape and bodie of an Asse.*

What? This great and heavenly wisdom? Are Phylosophers contented then, to quit it for a corporall and earthly veile? Why then it is not for reasons sake, nor by discourse, and for the soule, we so much excell beasts: it is for the love we beare unto our beautie, unto our faire hew, and goodly disposition of limbs, that we reject, and set our understanding at nought, our wisdom, and what else we have. Well, I allow of this ingenious and voluntarie confession: surely they knew those parts, we so much labour to pamper, to be meere fantazies. Suppose, beasts had all the vertue, the knowledge, the wisdom and sufficiencie of the Stoikes, they should still be beasts; nor might they ever be compared unto a miserable, wretched, and senseless man. For, when all is done, whatsoever is not as we are, is not of any worth. And God to be esteemed of us, must (as we will shew anon) draw somewhat neere it. Whereby it appeareth, that it is not long of a true discourse, but of a foolish-hardinesse, and selfe-presuming obstinacie, we prefer our selves before other creatures, and sequester our selves from their condition and societie. But to returne to our purpose, we have for our part inconstancie, irresolution, uncertainty, sorrow, superstition, carefulnesse for future things (yea after our life) ambition, covetousnesse, jelousie, envie, inordinate, mad and untamed appetites, warre, falsehood, disloyaltie, detraction, and curiositie. Surely we have strangely overpaid this wortheie discourse, whereof we so much glorie, and this readinesse to judge, or capacitie to know, if we have purchased the same with the price of so infinit passions, to which we are uncessantly enthralled. If we be not pleased (as *Socrates* is) to make this noble prerogative over beasts, to be of force, that whereas nature hath prescribed them certaine seasons, and

## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

bounds for their naturall lust and voluptuousnesse, she hath given us at all howers and occasions the full reines of them. *Ut vinum ægrotis, quia prodest raro, nocet sæpiissime, melius est non adhibere omnino, quam, spe dubiæ salutis in apertam perniciem incurrere: Sic, haud scio, an melius fuerit humano generi motum istum celerem cogitationis acumen, solertiam quem rationem vocamus, quoniam pestifera sint multis, admodum paucis salutaria, non dari omnino, quam tam munifice et tam large dari* (Cic. Nat. Deor. iii.). As it is better not to use wine at all in sicke persons, because it seldome doth them good, but many times much hurt, than in hope of doubtfull health, to run into undoubted danger; so doe I not knowe, whether it were better that this swift motion of the thought, this sharpnesse, this conceitednesse, which we call reason, should not at all be given to mankind (because it is pernicious unto many, and healthfull to verie few) than that it should be given so plentifully and so largely. What good or commoditie may we imagine this far-understanding of so many things brought ever unto Varro, and to Aristotle? Did it ever exempt, or could it at any time free them from humane inconveniences? Were they ever discharged of those accidents that incidently follow a seelie labouring man? Could they ever draw any ease for the gout from Logike? And howbeit they knew the humour engendring the same to lodge in the joints, have they felt it the lesse? Did they at any time make a covenant with death, although they knew full well that some nations rejoyce at her coming? as also of Cuckoldship, because they knew women to be common in some Countries? But contrariwise having both held the first ranke in knowledge, the one amongst the Romanes, the other among the Grecians, yea, and at such times wherein sciences flourished most, we could never learne, they had any speciall excellencie in their life. Wee see the



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Græcian hath been put to his plunges in seeking to discharge himselfe from some notable imputations in his life. Was it ever found that sensualitie, and health, are more pleasing unto him that understands Astrologie and Grammar?

(*Illiterati num minus nervi rigent?*—HOR. *Epod.* viii. 17.

As stiffe unlearned sinnewes stand,  
As theirs that much more understand.)

or shame and povertie lesse importunate and vexing?

*Scilicet et morbis, et debilitate carebis,  
Et luctum, et curam effugies, et tempora vitæ  
Longa tibi posthæc fato meliore dabuntur.*

—JUVEN. *Sat.* xiv. 156.

Thou shall be from disease and weaknesse free,  
From moane, from care, long time of life to thee  
Stand by more friendly fate afforded be.

I have in my daies seen a hundred Artificers, and as many labourers, more wise and more happie, than some Rectors in the Universitie, and whom I would rather resemble. Me thinks Learning hath a place amongst things necessarie for mans life, as glorie, noblenesse, dignitie, or at most as riches, and such other qualities, which indeed stead the same; but a far-off, and more in conceipt, than by Nature. We have not much more need of offices, of rules, and lawes how to live in our common-wealth, than the Cranes and Ants have in theirs. Which notwithstanding, we see how orderly, and without instruction they maintaine themselves. *If man were wise he would value every thing according to it's worth, and as it is either more profitable, or more necessarie for life.* He that shall number us by our actions and proceedings, shall doubtlesse finde many more excellent-ones amongst the ignorant, than among the wiser sort: I meane in all kind of vertues. My opinion is, that ancient *Rome* brought forth many men of much



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

more valour and sufficiencie, both for peace and warre, than this late learned *Rome*, which with all her wisdom hath overthrowne her erst-flourishing estate. If all the rest were alike, then should honestie and innocencie at least belong to the ancient; for she was exceedingly well placed with simplicitie. But I will shorten this discourse, which haply would draw me further than I would willingly follow: yet thus much I will say more, that *onely humilitie and submission is able to make a perfect honest man*. Every one must not have the knowledge of his dutie referred to his own judgement, but ought rather to have it prescribed unto him, and not be allowed to chuse it at his pleasure and free-will: otherwise according to the imbecilitie of our reasons, and infinite varietie of our opinions, we might peradventure forge and devise such duties unto our selves, as would induce us (as *Epicurus* saith) to endeavour to destroy and devoure one another. *The first law that ever God gave unto man, was a Law of pure obedience*. It was a bare and simple commandement whereof man should enquire and know no further: forasmuch, as *to obey is the proper dutie of a reasonable soule, acknowledging a heavenly and superiour benefactor*. From obeying and yeelding unto him proceed all other vertues; even as all sinnes derive from selfe-over-weening. Contrariwise, the first temptation that ever seized on humane Nature was disobedience, by the Devils instigation, whose first poison, so far insinuated it selfe into us, by reason of the promises he made us of wisdom and knowledge, *Eritis sicut Dii scientes bonum et malum* (*Genesis*, cap. iii. 5). *You shall be like Gods, knowing both good and evill*. And the Syrens, to deceive *Ulysses*, and alluring him to fall into their dangerous and confounding snares, offer to give him the full fruition of knowledge. *The opinion of*

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

PTER  
 II  
 —  
 ologie  
 mond  
 1
 
*Ignorance is the plague of man.* That is the occasion why ignorance is by our Religion recommended unto us, as an instrument fitting beleefe, and obedience. *Cavete, ne quis vos decipiat per Philosophiam et inanes seductiones, secundum elementa mundi* (Coloss. cap. ii. 8). *Take heed, lest any man deceive you by Philosophie and vaine seducements, according to the rudiments of the world.* All the Philosophers of all the sects that ever were, do generally agree in this point, that the chiefest felicitie, or *summum bonum* consisteth in the peace and tranquillitie of the soule and bodie: but where shall we finde it?

*Ad summum sapiens uno minor est Jove, dices,  
 Liber, honoratus, pulcher, Rex denique Regum.  
 Procerus sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est.*  
 —HOR. i. *Epist.* i. *Antepen.*

In summe, who wise is knowne,  
 Is lesse than Jove alone,  
 Rich, honorable, free, faire, King of Kings,  
 Chiefely in health, but when fleagme trouble brings.

It seemeth verily, that Nature for the comfort of our miserable and wretched condition, hath allotted us no other portion, but presumption. It is therefore (as *Epictetus* saith) that man hath nothing that is properly his owne, but the use of his opinions. Our hereditarie portion is nothing but smoke and wind. The Gods (as saith Philosophie) have health in true essence, and sicknesse in conceipt. *Men cleane contrarie, possesseth goods in imagination, and evils essentially.* We have had reason to make the powers of our imagination to be of force: For, all our felicities are but in conceipt, and as it were in a dreame. Heare but this poore and miserable creature vaunt himselfe. There is nothing (saith *Cicero*) so delightfull and pleasant as the knowledge of Letters: of Letters I say, by whose meanes the infinitie of things, the incompre-

## THE SECOND BOOKE

hensible greatnesse of nature, the heavens, the earth, and all the Seas of this vast universe, are made knowne unto us. They have taught us Religion, moderation, stowtnesse of courage, and redeemed our soule out of darknesse, to make her see, and distinguish of all things, the high aswell as the lowe, the first as the last, and those betweene both. It is they that store and supplie us with all such things as may make us live happily and well, and instruct us how to passe our time without sorrow or offence. Seemeth not this goodly Orator to speake of the Almightyes and everliving Gods condition? And touching effects, a thousand poore seelie women in a countrie towne have lived, and live a life much more reposed, more peaceable, and more constant, than ever he did.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*Deus ille fuit Deus, inclyte Memmi,  
Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ  
Nunc appellatur sapientia, quique per artem,  
Fluctibus è tantis vitam tantisque tenebris,  
In tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.*

Good sir, it was God, God it was, first found  
That course of mans life, which now is renown'd  
By name of wisdom; who by art repose,  
Our life in so cleare light, calme so compose,  
From so great darknesse, so great waves oppose.

Observe what glorious and noble words these be: yet but a sleight accident brought this wisdomans understanding to a far worse condition, than that of a simple shepherd: notwithstanding this divine Teacher, and this heavenly wisdom. Of like impudence is the promise of *Democritus* his Booke. *I will now speake of all things:* And that fond title which *Aristotle* gives us of mortall gods, and that rash judgement of *Chrysippus*, that *Dion* was as vertuous as God: And my *Seneca* saith, he acknowledgeth that God hath given him life,



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

but how to live well, that he hath of himselfe. Like unto this other: *In virtute vere gloriamur, quod non contingeret, si id donum à Deo, non à nobis haberemus* (Cic. Nat. Deo. iii.). *We rightly vaunt us of vertue, which we should not doe, if we had it of God, not of our selves.* This also is *Senecaes*, that the wise man hath a fortitude like unto Gods; but [in humane] weaknesse, wherein he excelleth him. There is nothing more common, than to meet with such passages of temeritie: There is not any of us that will be so much offended to see himselfe compared to God, as he will deeme himselfe wronged to be depressed in the ranke of other creatures. So much are we more jealous of our owne interest, than of our Creators. But we must tread this foolish vanitie under foot, and boldly shake off, and lively reject those fond-ridiculous foundations, whereon these false opinions are built. So long as man shall be perswaded to have meanes or power of himselfe, so long wil he denie, and never acknowledge what he oweth unto his Master: he shall alwaies (as the common saying is) make shift with his owne: He must be stripped into his shirt. Let us consider some notable example of the effect of Philosophie. *Possidonius* having long time been grieved with a painfull-lingring disease, which with the smarting-paine made him to wring his hands, and gnash his teeth, thought to scorne grieve, with exclayming and crying out against it: *Doo what thou list yet will I never say that thou art evill or paine.* He feeleth the same passions that my lackey doth, but he boasteth himselfe, that at least he containeth his tongue under the lawes of his sect. *Re succumbere non oportebat verbis gloriantem: It was not for him to yeeld in deeds, who had so braved it in words.* *Arcesilas* lying sick of the gowt, *Carneades* comming to visit him, and seeing him to frowne, supposing he had been angrie

## THE SECOND BOOKE

was going away againe, but he called him backe, and shewing him his feet and brest, said unto him, There is nothing come from thence hither. This hath somewhat a better garbe; for he feeleth himselfe grieved with sicknesse, and would faine be rid of it, yet is not his heart vanquished or weakned thereby, the other stands upon his stifnesse (as I feare) more verball than essentiall. And *Dionysius Heracleotes* being tormented with a violent smarting in his eies, was at last perswaded to quit these Stoicke resolutions.

Be it supposed that Learning and Knowledge should worke those effects they speake of, that is, to blunt and abate the sharpnesse of those accidents or mishances, that follow and attend us; doth she any more than what ignorance effecteth much more evidently and simply? The Philosopher *Pyrrho* being at Sea, and by reason of a violent storme in great danger to be cast away, presented nothing unto those that were with him in the ship, to imitate but the securitie of an Hog which was aboard, who nothing at all dismaied, seemed to behold and out-stare the tempest. Philosophie after all her precepts gives us over to the examples of a Wrestler, or of a Muletier, in whom we ordinarily perceive much lesse feeling of death, of paine, of griefe, and other inconveniences, and more undanted constancie, than ever Learning or Knowledge could store a man withall, unlesse he were borne, and of himselfe through some naturall habitude, prepared unto it. What is the cause, the tender members of a childe, or limbs of a horse are much more easie, and with lesse paine cut and incised than ours, if it be not ignorance? How many, onely through the power of imagination, have falne into dangerous diseases? We ordinarily see diverse that will cause themselves to be let bloud, purged, and dieted, because they would be cured of diseases, they never felt but in conceit; when essen-

CHAPT  
XII

An Apol  
of Raym  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

tial and true maladies faile us, then Science and knowledge lends us hers: This colour or complexion (said she) presageth some rheumatike defluxion will ensue you: This soultring-hot season menaceth you with some febricant commotion; this cutting of the vitall line of your left hand warneth you of some notable and approaching indisposition. And at last she will roundly addresse her selfe unto perfect health; saying, this youthly vigor and suddain joy can not [possibly] stay in one place, her bloud and strength must be abated, for feare it turne you to some mischiefe. Compare but the life of a man subject to these imaginations, unto that of a day-labouring swaine, who followes his naturall appetites, who measureth all things onely by the present sense, and hath neither learning nor prognostications, who feeleth no disease but when he hath it: whereas the other hath often the stone imaginarily, before he have it in his reines: As if it were not time enough to endure the sicknesse when it shall come, he doth in his fansie prevent the same, and headlong runneth to meet with it. What I speake of Phisicke, the same may generally be applied and drawne to all manner of learning. Thence came this ancient opinion of those Philosophers, who placed chiefe felicitie in the acknowledging of our judgements weaknesse. My ignorance affords me as much cause of hope as of feare: and having no other regiment for my health, than that of other mens examples, and of the events, I see elsewhere in like occasions, whereof I find some of all sorts: And relie upon the comparisons, that are most favourable unto me. I embrace health with open armes, free, plaine, and full, and prepare my appetite to enjoy it, by how much more, it is now lesse ordinarie and more rare unto me: so far is it from me, that I with the bitterness of some new and forced kind of life, trouble her rest, and molest her ease. Beasts doe manifestly



## THE SECOND BOOKE

declare unto us, how many infirmities our mindes agitation bring us. That which is told us of those that inhabit *Bresill*, who die onely through age, which some impute to the clearenesse and calmenesse of their aire, I rather ascribe to the calmnesse and clearenesse of their minds, void and free from all passions, cares, toiling, and unpleasant labours, as a people that passe their life in a wonderfull kind of simplicitie and ignorance, without letters, or lawes, and without Kings, or any Religion. Whence comes it (as we daily see by experience) that the rudest and grossest clownes, are more tough, strong, and more desired in amorous executions: And that the love of a Muletier is often more accepted, than that of a perfumed-quaint courtier? But because in the latter, the agitation of his minde doth so distract, trouble, and wearie the force of his bodie: as it also troubleth and wearie it selfe, who doth belie, or more commonly cast the same downe even into madnesse, but her owne promptitude, her point, her agilitie, and to conclude her proper force? *Whence proceeds the subtillest follie, but from the subtillest wisdom?* As from the extremest friendships proceed the extremest enmities, and from the soundest healths, the mortallest diseases; so from the rarest and quickest agitations of our minds ensue the most dis-tempered and outrageous frenzies. There wants but halfe a pegs turne to passe from the one to the other. In mad mens actions, we see how fitlie follie suteth and meets with the strongest operations of our minde. Who knowes not how unperceivable the neighbourhood betweene follie with the liveliest elevations of a free minde is; and the effects of a supreme and extraordinarie vertue? *Plato* affirmeth, that melancholy minds are more excellent and disciplinable; So are there none more inclinable unto follie. Diverse spirits are seene to be overthrowne by their owne force, and proper nimblenesse. What a start hath

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

one of the most judicious, ingenious, and most fitted unto the ayre of true ancient poesie (TORQUATO TASSO), lately gotten by his owne agitation and self-gladdnesse, above all other Italian Poets that have been of a long time? Hath not he wherewith to be beholding unto this his killing vivacitie? unto this clearenesse, that hath so blinded him? unto his exact and far-reaching apprehension of reasons which hath made him voide of reason? unto the curious and laborious pursute of Sciences, that have brought him unto sottishnesse? unto this rare aptitude to the exercises of the minde, which hath made him without minde or exercise? I rather spited than pittied him, when I saw him at *Ferrara*, in so pitteous a plight, that he survived himselfe; misacknowledging both himselfe and his labours, which unwitting to him, and even to his face, have been published both uncorrected and maimed. Will you have a man healthy, will you have him regular, and in constant and safe condition? overwhelme him in the darke pit of idlenesse, and dulnesse. We must be besotted ere we can become wise, and dazled before we can be led. And if a man shall tell me, that the commoditie to have the appetite cold to griefes, and wallowish to evils, drawes this incommoditie after it, it is also consequently the same that makes us lesse sharpe and greedie to the enjoying of good, and of pleasures: It is true, but the miserie of our condition beareth, that we have not so much to enjoy, as to shun, and that extreme voluptuousnesse doth not so much pinch us, as a light smart: *Segnius homines bona quam mala sentiunt.* Men have a duller feeling of a good turne, than of an ill, we have not so sensible a feeling of perfect health, as we have of the least sicknesse.

—pungit

*In cute vix summa violatum plagula corpus,  
Quando valere nihil quemquam movet. Hoc juvat unum*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Quod me non torquet latus aut pes ; cætera quinquam  
Vis queat aut sanum sese, aut sentire valentem.*

A light stroke that dooth scarce the top-skin wound,  
Greeves the gall'd bodie, when in health to be,  
Dooth scarce move any : onely ease is found,  
That neither side nor foot tormenteth me :  
Scarce any in the rest can feel he's sound.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Our being in health, is but the privation of being ill.* See wherefore the sect of Philosophie, that hath most preferred sensualitie, hath also placed the same but to indolencie or unfeeling of paine. To have no infirmitie at all is the chiefest possession of health that man can hope-for (as *Ennius* said :)

*Nimum boni est, cui nihil est mali.*—*ENNIUS.*

He hath but too much good,  
Whom no ill hath withstood.

For, the same tickling and pricking, which a man doth feel in some pleasures, and seemes beyond simple health, and indolencie, this active and moving sensualitie, or as I may term it, itching and tickling pleasure aymes but to be free from paine, as her chiefest scope. The lust-full longing which allures us to the acquaintance of women, seekes but to expell that paine, which an earnest and burning desire doth possesse-us-with, and desireth but to allay it thereby to come to rest, and be exempted from this fever ; And so of others. I say therefore, that if simplicitie directeth us to have no evill, it also addresseth us according to our condition to a most happie estate. Yet ought it not to be imagined so dull and heavie, that it be altogether senselesse. And *Crantor* had great reason to withstand the unsensiblenesse of *Epicurus*, if it were so deeply rooted, that the approaching and birth of evils might gainsay it. I commend not that unsensiblenesse, which is neither possible nor to be desired. I am well pleased



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

not to be sicke, but if I be, I will know that I am so; and if I be cauterized or cut, I will feel it. Verily, *he that should root out the knowledge of evill, should therewithall extirp the knowledge of voluptuousnesse, and at last bring man to nothing. Istud nihil dolere, non sine magna mercede contingit immanitatis in animo, stuporis in corpore* (Cic. Tusc. Qu. iii.). This verie point, not to be offended or grieved with any thing, befals not freely to a man, without either inhumanitie in his minde, or senselesnesse in his bodie. Sicknesse is not amiss unto man, comming in her turne: Nor is he alwaies to shun paine, nor ever to follow sensualitie. It is a great advantage for the honour of ignorance, that Science it selfe throwes us into her armes, when she findes her selfe busie to make us strong against the assaults of evils: she is forced to come to this composition; to yeeld us the bridle, and give us leave to shrowd our selves in her lap, and submit our selves unto her favour, to shelter us against the assaults and injuries of fortune. For, what meaneth she else, when she perswades us to withdraw our thoughts from the evils that possesse us, and entertaine them with fore-gon pleasures, and stead us as a comfort of present evils with the remembrance of fore-past felicities, and call a vanished content to our help, for to oppose it against that which vexeth us? *Levationes ægritudinum in avocatione à cogitanda molestia, et revocatione ad contemplandas voluptates ponit. Eases of griefes he reposeth either in calling from the thought of offence, or calling to the contemplations of some pleasures.* Unlesse it be, that where force failes her, she will use policie, and shew a tricke of nimblenesse and turne away, where the vigor both of her bodie and armes shall faile her. For, not onely to a strict Philosopher, but simply to any settled man, when he by experience feeleth the burning alteration of a hot fever, what

## THE SECOND BOOKE

current paiment is it to pay him with the remembrance of the sweetnesse of Greeke wine? It would rather empaire his bargaine.

CHAPTER  
XII

—  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Che ricordarsi il ben doppia la noia.*

For to thinke of our joy,  
Redoubles our annoy.

Of that condition is this other counsell, which Philosophie giveth, onely to keepe forepast felicities in memorie, and thence blot out such griefes as we have felt: and if the skill to forget were in our power: and counsell, of which we have much lesse.

*Suaris est laborum præteritorum memoria.*

—Cic. *Fin.* ii. Eurip.

Of labours overpast,  
Remembrance hath sweet taste.

What? shall Philosophie, which ought to put the weapons into my hands, to fight against fortune; which should harden my courage, to suppress and lay at my feet all humane adversities, will she so faint, as to make me like a fearfull cunnie creepe into some lurking-hole, and like a craven to tremble and yeeld? For, memorie representeth unto us, not what we chuse, but what pleaseth her. Nay, there is nothing so deeply imprinteth any thing in our remembrance, as the desire to forget the same: It is a good way to commend to the keeping, and imprint any thing in our minde, to sollicite her to lose the same. And that is false. *Est situm in nobis, ut et adversa, quasi perpetua oblivione obruamus, et secunda lætunde et suaviter meminimus* (Cic. *Fin. Bon.* i.). This is ingrafted in us, or at least in our power, that we both burie in perpetuall oblivion things past against us, and record with pleasure and delight whatsoever we see for us.

And this is true, *Memini etiam quæ nolo; obliisci*

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*non possum quæ volo (PLU. in vita Them.). I remember even those things I would not ; and can not forget what I would. And whose counsell is this ? his, Qui se unus sapientem profiteri sit ausus. Who onely durst professe himselfe a wise man.*

*Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes  
Præstrinxit stellas, exortus uti ætherius Sol.*

—LUCR. iii. 1086. Epicur.

Who from all mankind bare for wit the prize,  
And dim'd the stars, as when skies Sunne doth rise.

To emptie and diminish the memorie, is it not  
the readie and onely way to ignorance ?

*Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est.*

—SEN. Oed. act iii. sce. i.

Of ills a remedie by chance,  
And verie dull is ignorance.

We see diverse like precepts, by which we are permitted to borrow frivolous apparances from the vulgar sort, where lively and strong reason is not of force sufficient : alwaies provided, they bring us content and comfort. Where they can not cure a sore, they are pleased to stupifie and hide the same. I am perswaded they will not denie me this, that if they could [possibly] adde any order or constancie to a mans life, that it might thereby be still maintained in pleasure and tranquillitie, by, or through any weakness or infirmitie of judgement, but they would accept it.

*—potare, et spargere flores*

*Incipiam, patiarque vel inconsultus haberi.*

—HOR. i. Epist. v. 14.

I will begin to strew flowers, and drinke free,  
And suffer witlesse, thriftlesse, held to bee.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

There should many Philosophers be found of CHAPTER  
XII  
*Lycas* his opinion: This man in all other things being verie temperate, and orderly in his demeanors, living quietly and contentedly with his familie, wanting of no dutie or office both toward his owne houshold and strangers, verie carefully preserving himselfe from all hurtfull things: notwithstanding through some alteration of his senses or spirits, he was so possessed with this fantastickall conceipt or obstinate humour, that he ever and continually thought to be amongst the Theaters, where he still saw all manner of spectacles, pastimes, sports, and the best Comedies of the world. But being at last by the skill of Physitions cured of this maladie, and his offending humour purged, he could hardly be held from putting them in suite, to the end they might restore him to the former pleasures and contents of his imagination.

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*pol me occidistis amici,  
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas,  
Et demptus per vim menti gratissimus error.*

—Hor. i. *Epist.* ii. 138.

You have not sav'd me, friends, but slaine me quite,  
(Quoth he) from whom so rest is my delight,  
And errour purg'd, which best did please my spright.

Of a raving like unto that of *Thrasilaus*, sonne unto *Pythodorus*, who verily beleev'd, that all the ships that went out from the haven of *Pyræum*, yea and all such as came into it, did only travell about his businesse, rejoycing when any of them had made a fortunate voyage, and welcommed them with great gladnesse: His brother *Crito*, having caused him to be cured, and restored to his better senses, he much bewailed and grieved the condition wherein he had formerly lived in such joy, and so void of all care and griefe. It is that, which that ancient Greeke

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER XII verse saith; That not to be so advised brings many commodities with it:

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἥδιοςτος βίος.

—SOPH. *Aia*. flag.

The sweetest life I wis,  
In knowing nothing is.

And as *Ecclesiastes* witnesseth: *In much wisdom, much sorrow*: And who getteth knowledge, purchaseth sorrow and griefe. Even that, to which Philosophy doth in generall tearmes allow this last remedy, which she ordaineth for all manner of necessities; that is, to make an end of that life, which we cannot endure. *Placet? pare: Non placet? quacunq; vis exi. Pungit dolor? vel fodiāt sane: si nudus es, da jugulum: sin tectus armis vulcaniis, id est, fortitudine, resiste* (CIC. *Tusc. Que. ii.*). Doth it like you? obey: doth it not like you? get out as you will: doth griefe pricke you? and let it pierce you too: if you be naked, yeeld your throat: but if you be covered with the armour of *Vulcan*, that is, with fortitude, resist. And that saying used of the Græcians in their banquets, which they aply unto it, *Aut bibat, aut abeat* (CIC. *Ib. v.*): *Either let him carouse, or carry him out of the house*: which rather fitteth the mouth of a Gascoine, than that of *Cicero*, who very easily doth change the letter B into V,

*Vivere si recte nescis, discede peritis:*

*Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti:*

*Tempus abire tibi est, ne potam largius æquo*

*Rideat, et pulset lascivia decentius ætas.*

—HOR. *ii. Epist. ii. ult.*

Live well you cannot, them that can give place;

Well have you sported, eaten well, drunke well:

Tis time you part; lest wanton youth with grace

Laugh at, and knock you that with swilling swell.

what is it but a confession of his insufficiency, and a sending one backe not only to ignorance, there to be



## THE SECOND BOOKE

shrowded, but unto stupidity it selfe, unto unsensible-  
nesse and not being?

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*Democritum post quam matura vetustas  
Admonuit memorem, motus languescere mentis :  
Sponte sua letho caput obuius obtulit ipse.*

—*LUCR. iii. 1083.*

When ripe age put *Democritus* in minde,  
That his mindes motions fainted, he to finde  
His death went willing, and his life resign'd.

It is that which *Anthistenes* said, that a man  
must provide himselfe either of wit to understand,  
or of a halter to hang himselfe: And that which  
*Chrysippus* alleaged upon the speech of the Poet  
*Tyrtæus*,

*De la vertu, ou de mort approchër.*

—*PLUT. in Solons life.*

Or vertue to approach,  
Or else let death inroch.

And *Crates* said, that love was cured with  
hunger, if not by time; and in him that liked not  
these two meanes, by the halter. That *Sextius*, to  
whom *Seneca* and *Plutarke* give so much commendation,  
having given over all things else and betaken  
himselfe to the study of Philosophy, seeing the pro-  
gresse of his studies so tedious and slow, purposed  
to cast himselfe into the Sea; Ranne unto death  
for want of knowledge: Reade here what the law  
saith upon this subject. If peradventure any great  
inconvenience happen, which cannot be remedied,  
the haven is not farre-off, and by swimming may a  
man save himselfe out of his body, as out of a  
leaking boat: for, it is feare to die, and not desire  
to live, which keepes a foole joynd to his boe  
As life through simplicity becommeth more pleas  
So (as I erewhile began to say) becommeth it



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

innocent and better. The simple and the ignorant (saith *S. Paul*) raise themselves up to heaven, and take possession of it; whereas we, withall the knowledge we have, plunge our selves downe to the pit of hell. I rely neither upon *Valentinianus* (a professed enemy to knowledge and learning) nor upon *Licinius* (both Roman Emperours) who named them the venime and plague of all politike estates: Nor on *Mahomet*, who (as I have heard) doth utterly interdict all manner of learning to his subjects. But the example of that great *Lycurgus*, and his authority ought to beare chiefe sway, and the reverence of that divine Lacedemonian policy, so great, so admirable, and so long time flourishing in all vertue and felicity without any institution or exercise at all of letters. Those who returne from that new world, which of late hath beene discovered by the Spaniards, can witnesse unto us, how those nations being without Magistrates or law, live much more regularly and formally than we, who have amongst us more Officers and lawes, than men of other professions, or actions.

*Di citatorie piene e di libelli,  
D' esame, di carte, e di procure  
Hanno le mani e'l seno, e gran fastelli  
Di chiose, di consigli e di letture,  
Per cui le facultà de' poverelli  
Non sono mai ne le città sicure,  
Hanno dietro e dinanzi e d' ambo i lati,  
Notai, procuratori, ed advocati.*

— ARIOSTO, can. xiv. stanz. 84.

Their hands and bosoms with writs and citations,  
With papers, libels, proxies, full they beare,  
And bundels great of strict examinations,  
Of glosses, counsels, readings here and there.  
Whereby in townes poore men of occupations  
Possesse not their small goods secure from feare,  
Before, behind, on each sides Advocates,  
Proctors, and Notaries hold up debates.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

It was that, which a Roman Senatour said, that *their predecessors had their breath stinking of garlike, and their stomake perfumed with a good conscience:* and contrary, the men of his times, outwardly smelt of nothing but sweet odours, but inwardly they stuncke of all vices: Which in mine opinion, is as much to say, they had much Knowledge and Sufficiency, but great want of honesty. Incivility, ignorance, simplicity, and rudnesse, are commonly joyned with innocency: Curiosity, subtilty, and knowledge, are ever followed with malice: Humility, feare, obedience, and honesty (which are the principall instruments for the preservation of humane society) require a single docile soule and which presumeth little of her selfe: Christians have a peculiar knowledge, *how curiosity is in a man a naturall, and originall infirmity.* The care to encrease in wisdom and knowledge was the first overthrow of mankinde: It is the way whereby man hath headlong cast himselfe downe into eternall damnation. Pride is his losse and corruption: It is pride, that misleadeth him from common waies; that makes him to embrace all newfangles, and rather chuse to be chiefe of a stragling troupe and in the path of perdition, and be regent of some erronious sect, and a teacher of falsehood, than a disciple in the schoole of truth, and suffer himselfe to be led and directed by the hand of others in the ready beaten high way. It is haply that, which the ancient Greeke proverbe implieth; *ἡ δεισιδαιμονία, καθάπερ πατὴρ, τῷ περὶ παύεται.* *Superstition obaieth pride as a father.* Oh over-weening, how much doest thou hinder us? *Socrates* being advertised, that the God of wisdom, had attributed the name of wise unto him, was thereat much astonished, and diligently searching and rousing up himself, and ransaking the very secrets of his heart found no foundation or ground for this divine sen-

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologia  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

...some that were as just, as tempe-  
 ...as wise as he, and more eloquent,  
 ...were profitable to their country. In  
 ...that he was distinguished from  
 ...wise, only because he did not so  
 ...And that his God deemed the  
 ...and wisdom a singular sottishnes  
 ...and that his best doctrine was the doctrine  
 ...and simplicitie his greatest wisdom.  
 ...pronounceth them to be miserable in  
 ...that esteeme themselves. *Dust and ashes*  
 ...*what is there in thee, thou shouldst so much*  
 ...And in another place, God had made  
 ...unto a shadowe, of which who shall judge,  
 ...the light being gone, it shall vanish away?  
 ...*thing of nothing.* So far are our faculties  
 ...conceiving that high Deitie, that of our Creators  
 ...those beare his marke best, and are most his  
 ...which we understand least. It is an occasion  
 ...Christians to beleeve, when they chance to  
 ...with any incredible thing, that it is so much the  
 ...according unto reason, by how much more it is  
 ...humane reason. If it were according unto  
 ...it were no more a wonder; and were it to be  
 ...it were no more singular. *Melius scitur*  
 ...*Deus nesciendo* (S. AUGUSTINE). *God is better knowne*  
 ...*by our not knowing him.* Saith S. Augustine: And  
 ...*Tacitus, Sanctius est ac reverentius de actis deorum*  
 ...*credere quam scire* (TACITUS, *Mor. German.*). It is  
 ...a course of more holinesse and reverence, to hold  
 ...beleeve, than to have knowledge of Gods actions. And  
 ...Plato deemeth it to be a vice of impiety, over-curiously  
 ...to enquire after God, after the world, and after the  
 ...first causes of things. *Atque illum quidem parentem*  
 ...*hujus universitatis invenire, difficile: et quum jam*  
 ...*invenieris, indicare in vulgus, nefas* (CIC. *Univer.*).  
 ...Both it is difficult to finde out the father of this



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*universe, and when you have found him, it is unlawful to reveale him to the vulgar, saith Cicero. We easily pronounce puissance, truth and justice; they be words importing some great matter, but that thing we neither see nor conceive. We say that God feareth, that God will be angry, and that God loveth.*

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Immortalia mortali sermone nolantes,*  
—LUCR. v. 122.

Who with tearmes of mortality  
Note things of immortality.

They be all agitations and [emotions], which according to our forme can have no place in God, nor we imagine them according to his. *It onely belongs to God to know himselfe, and interpret his owne workes*; and in our tongues he doth it improperly, to descend and come downe to us, that are, and lie groveling on the ground. How can wisdome (which is the choice betweene good and evill) besee me him, seeing no evill doth touch him? How reason and intelligence, which we use to come from obscure to apparant things, seeing there is no obscure thing in God? Justice which distributeth unto every man what belongs unto him, created for the society and conversation of man, how is she in God? How temperance, which is the moderation of corporall sensualities, which have no place at all in his God-head? Fortitude patiently to endure sorrowes, and labours and dangers, appertaineth [as] little unto him; these three things no way approaching him, having no accesse unto him. And therefore *Aristotle* holds him to be equally exempted from vertue and from vice. *Neque gratia, neque ira teneri potest, quod quæ talia essent, imbecilla essent omnia* (Cic. Nat. Deor. i.). *Nor can he be possessed with favor and anger; for all that is so, is but weake.* The participation which we have of the knowledge of truth, what soever

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

is, it is not by our owne strength we have gotten it; God hath sufficiently taught it us in that he hath made choice of the simple, common and ignorant, to teach us his wonderfull secrets. Our faith hath not been purchased by us: it is a gift proceeding from the liberality of others. It is not by our discourse or understanding, that we have received our religion, it is by a forreine authority, and commandement. The weaknesse of our judgement, helps us more than our strength to compasse the same, and our blindness more than our cleare-sighted eies. It is more by the meanes of our ignorance, than of our skill, that we are wise in heavenly knowledge. It is no marvell if our naturall and terrestriall meanes cannot conceive the supernaturall, or apprehend the celestial knowledge. Let us adde nothing of our own unto it, but obedience and subjection: For (as it is written) *I will confound the wisdom of the wise, and destroy the understanding of the prudent, where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?* (1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21). Hath not God made the wisdom of this world foolishnesse? For seeing the world by wisdom knew not God in the wisdom of God, it hath pleased him, by the vanity of preaching, to save them that beleieve. Yet must I see at last, whether it be in mans power to finde what he seekes for: and if this long search, wherein he hath continued so many ages, hath enriched him with any new strength or solid truth: I am perswaded, if he speake in conscience, he will confesse, that all the benefit he hath gotten by so tedious a pursuit, hath been, that he hath learned to know his owne weaknesse. The ignorance which in us was naturall, we have with long study confirmed and averred. It hath happened unto those that are truly learned, as it hapneth unto eares of Corne, which as long as they are empty,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

grow and raise their head aloft, upright and stout; but if they once become full and bigge, with ripe Corne, they begin to humble and droope downward. So men having tried, and sounded all, and in all this Chaos, and huge heape of learning and provision of so infinite different things, and found nothing that is substantiall firme and steadie, but all vanitie, have renounced their presumption, and too late knowen their naturall condition. It is that, which *Velleus* upbraids *Cotta* and *Cicero* withall, that they have learnt of *Philo*, to have learned nothing. *Pherecydes*, one of the seaven wise, writing to *Thales* even as he was yeelding up the Ghost; I have (saith he) appoynted my friends, as soone as I shalbe layed in my grave, to bring thee all my writings. If they please thee and the other Sages publish them; If not, conceale them. They containe no certaintie, nor doe they any whit satisfie mee. My profession is not to know the truth nor to attaine it. I rather open than discover things. *The wisest that ever was being demanded what he knew, answered, he knew that he knew nothing.* He verified what some say, that the greatest part of what we know, is the least part of what we know not: that is, that that which we thinke to know, is but a parcel, yea and a small particle of our ignorance. We know things in a dreame (saith *Plato*) and we are ignorant of them in truth. *Omnes pene veteres nihil cognosci, nihil percipi, nihil sciri posse dixerunt: angustos sensus, imbecilles animos, brevia curricula vitæ* (*Cic. Acad. Q. i.*). Almost all the ancients affirmed nothing may be knowen, nothing perceived, nothing understood: that our senses are narrow, our mindes are weake, and the race of our life is short. *Cicero* himselfe, who ought all he had unto learning, *Valerius* saith, that in his age he began to disesteeme letters: And whilst he prac-

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

tised them, it was without bond to any special body, following what seemed probable unto him, now in the one, and now in the other Sect; ever holding himselfe under the Academies doubtfulnessse. *Dicendum est, sed ita ut nihil affirmem: quæram omnia, dubitans plerumque, et nihil diffidens* (Cic. *Divin.* i.). *Speake I must, but so as I avouch nothing, question all things, for the most part in doubt and distrust of my selfe.* I should have too much adoe, if I would consider man after his owne fashion, and in grose: which I might doe by his owne rule, who is wont to judge of truth not by the weight or value of voices but by the number. But leave we the common people,

*Qui vigilans stertit,*

—LUCR. iii. 1091.

Who snoare while they are awake.

*Mortua cui vita est, prope jam vivo atque videnti:*

—LUCR. iii. 1089.

Whose life is dead while yet they see,  
And in a manner living be.

Who feeleth not himselfe, who judgeth not himselfe, who leaves the greatest part of his naturall parts idle. I will take man even in his highest estate. Let us consider him in this small number of excellent and choise men, who having naturally beene endowed with a peculiar and exquisite wit, have also fostred and sharpened the same with care, with study and with art, and have brought and strained unto the highest pitch of wisdom, it may possibly reach unto. They have fitted their soule unto all senses, and squared the same to all byases; they have strengthened and under-propped it with all foraine helpes, that might any way fit or stead her, and have enriched and adorned her with whatsoever they have beene able to borrow, either within

## THE SECOND BOOKE

or without the world for her availe: It is in them, that the extreme height of humane Nature doth lodge. They have reformed the world with policies and lawes. They have instructed the same with arts and sciences, as also by example of their wonderfull manners and life. I will but make accompt of such people, of their witnesse and of their experience. Let us see how far they have gone, and what holdfast they have held by. The maladies and defects, which we shall finde in that College, the world may boldly allow them to be his. Whosoever seekes for any thing, commeth at last to this conclusion and saith, that either he hath found it, or that it cannot be found, or that he is still in pursuit after it. All Philosophy is divided into these three kindes. Her purpose is to seeke out the truth, the knowledge and the certainty. The Peripatetike, the Epicurians, the Stoickes and others have thought they had found it. These have established the Sciences that we have, and as of certaine knowledges have treated of them; *Clitomachus*, *Carneades* and the *Academikes*, have despaired the finding of it, and judged that truth could not be conceived by our meanes. The end of these is weaknesse and ignorance. The former had more followers, and the worthiest Sectaries. *Pyrro* and other *Sceptikes*, or *Epechistes*, whose doctrine or manner of teaching, many auncient learned men have thought to have beene drawne, from *Homer*, from the seaven wise men, from *Archilochus* and *Euripides*, to whom they joyne *Zeno*, *Democritus* and *Xenophanes*, say, that they are still seeking after truth. These judge that those are infinitely deceived, who imagine they have found it, and that the second degree is over boldly vaine in affirming that mans power is altogether unable to attaine unto it. For to stablish the measure of our strength, to know and distinguish of the diffi-

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

of things is a great, a notable and extreme  
situation, which they doubt whether man be capable  
thereof or no.

*Nihil enim scimus quicquam, id quoque nescit,  
id non scimus quo se illi scire fateatur.*

—Luca. iv. 471.

What thinks nothing is knowne, knowes not that, whereby hee  
Graunts he knowes nothing if it knowne may bee.

That ignorance, which knoweth judgeth and con-  
demneth it selfe, is not an absolute ignorance: For,  
to be so, she must altogether be ignorant of her  
selfe. So that the profession of the Phyrronians is  
ever to waver, to doubt and to enquire; never to  
be assured of any thing, nor to take any warrant of  
himself. Of the three actions or faculties of the  
soule, that is to say, the imaginative, the concu-  
piscible, and the consenting, they allow and conceive  
the two former: the last, they hold and defend to  
be ambiguous, without inclination or approbation,  
either of one or other side, be it never so light,  
Zeno in jesture painted forth his imagination upon  
this division of the soules faculties: the open and  
out-stretched hand was apparance; the hand halfe-  
shut, and fingers somewhat bending, consent: the  
fist close, comprehension: if the fist of the left-  
hand were closely clinched together, it signified  
Science. Now this situation of their judgement,  
straight and inflexible, receiving all objects with  
application or consent, leads them unto their Atar-  
axie; which is the condition of a quiet and settled  
life, exempted from the agitations which we receive  
by the impression of the opinion and knowledge we  
imagine to have of things; whence proceed, feare,  
avarice, envie, immoderate desires, ambition, pride,  
superstition, love of novelties, rebellion, disobedience,  
obstinacie, and the greatest number of corporall



## THE SECOND BOOKE

evils: yea by that meane they are exempted from the jealousie of their owne discipline, for they contend but faintly: They feare nor revenge, nor contradiction in the disputations. When they say, that heavy things descend downeward, they would be loath to be beleaved, but desire to be contradicted, thereby to engender doubt, and suspence of judgement, which is their end and drift. They put forth their propositions, but to contend with those, they imagine wee hold in our conceipt. If you take theirs, then will they undertake to maintaine the contrary: all is one to them, nor will they give a penny to chuse. If you propose that snow is blacke, they will argue on the other side, that it is white. If you say it is neither one nor other, they will maintaine it to be both. If by a certaine judgement, you say that you cannot tell, they will maintaine that you can tell. Nay, if by an affirmative axiome, you swear that you stand in some doubt, they will dispute, that you doubt not of it, or that you cannot judge or maintaine, that you are in doubt. And by this extremitie of doubt, which staggereth it selfe, they separat and devide themselves from many opinions, yea from those which divers wayes have maintained both the doubt and the ignorance. Why shall it not be granted then (say they) as to Dogmatists, or Doctrine-teachers, for one to say greene, and another yellow, so for them to doubt? *Is there any thing can be proposed unto you, eyther to allow or refuse, which may not lawfully be considered as ambiguous and doubtfull?* And whereas others be carryed either by the custome of their Countrey, or by the institution of their Parents, or by chance, as by a Tempest, without choyce or judgement, yea sometimes before the age of descretion, to such or such another opinion, to the Stoike or Epicurian Sect, to which they finde

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

themselves more engaged, subjected or fast tyed, as to a prize they cannot let goe: *Ad quamcunque disciplinam, velut Tempestate, delati ad eam tanquam ad saxum adhærescunt* (Cic. *Academ. Qu. x.*). Being carryed as it were by a Tempest, to any kinde of doctrine, they sticke close to it, as it were to a rocke. Why shall not these likewise be permitted, to maintaine their liberty, and consider of things without dutie or compulsion? *Hoc liberiores, et solutiores, quod integra illis est judicandi potestas* (*Ibid.*). They are so much the freer and at liberty, for that their power of judgement is kept entire. Is it not some advantage for one to finde himselfe disingaged from necessitie, which brideleth others? Is it not better to remaine in suspence, than to entangle himselfe in so many errorrs, that humane fantasie hath brought forth? Is it not better for a man to suspend his owne perswasion, than to meddle with these sedicious and quarellous divisions? What shall I chuse? Mary, what you list, so you chuse. A very foolish answer: to which it seemeth nevertheless, that all Dogmatisme arriveth; by which it is not lawfull for you to bee ignorant of that we know not. Take the best and strongest side, it shall never be so sure, but you shall have occasion to defend the same, to close and combat a hundred and a hundred sides? Is it not better to keepe out of this confusion? You are suffered to embrace as your honour and life *Aristotles* opinion, upon the eternitie of the soule, and to belie and contradict whatsoever *Plato* saith concerning that; and shall they be interdicted to doubt of it? If it be lawfull for *Panæcius* to maintaine his judgement about Aruspices, Dreames, Oracles and Prophecies, whereof the Stoikes makes no doubt at all: Wherefore shall not a wiseman dare that in all things, which this man dareth in such as he hath learned of his



## THE SECOND BOOKE

Masters? Confirmed and established by the general consent of the Schoole whereof he is a Sectary and a Professor? If it be a Childe that judgeth, he wots not what it is; if a learned man, he is forestalled. They have reserved a great advantage for themselves in the combat, having discharged themselves of the care how to shroud themselves. They care not to be beaten, so they may strike againe: And all is fish that comes to net with them: If they overcome, your proposition halteth; if you, theirs is lame; if they faile they verifie ignorance, if you, she is verified by you; if they prove that nothing is knowen, it is very well: If they cannot prove it, it is good alike: *Ut quum in eadem re paria contrariis in partibus momenta inveniuntur, facilius ab utraque parte assertio sustineatur* (Cic. *Ibid.*). So as when the same matter the like weight and moment is found on divers parts, we may the more easily withhold avouching on both parts. And they suppose to find out more easily, why a thing is false, than true, and that which is not, than that which is: and what they beleeve not, than what they beleeve. Their manner of speech is, *I confirme nothing*: It is no more so than thus, or neither: I conceive it not; Apparances are every where alike. The law of speaking *pro* or *contra* is all one. *Nothing seemeth true, that may not seeme false.* Their Sacramentall word is, *ἐπέχω*, which is as much to say, as I hold and stir not. Behold the burdons of their songs and other such like. Theyr effects is, a pure, entire and absolute surceasing and suspence of judgement. They use their reason, to enquire and to debate; and not to stay and choose. Whosoever shall imagine a perpetuall confession of ignorance, and a judgement upright and without staggering, to what occasion soever may chance; That man conceives the true Phyrhonisme. I ex-

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

pound this fantazy as plaine as I can, because many deeme it hard to be conceived: And the Authors themselves represent it somewhat obscurely and diversly. Touching the actions of life, in that they are after the common sort, they are lent and applied to naturall inclinations, to the impulsion and constraint of passions, to the constitutions of lawes, and customes, and to the tradition of arts: *Non enim nos Deus ista scire, sed tantummodo uti voluit* (CIC. *Divin. i.*). *For God would not have us know these things, but onely use them.* By such meanes they suffer their common actions to be directed, without any conceit or judgement, which is the reason that I cannot well sort unto this discourse, what is said of *Pyrro*. They faine him to be stupide and unmovable, leading a kinde of wilde and unsociable life, not shunning to be hit with Carts, presenting himselfe unto downefalls, refusing to conforme himselfe to the lawes. It is an endearing of his discipline. Hee would not make himselfe a stone or a blocke, but a living, discoursing and reasoning man, enjoying all pleasures and naturall commodities, busying himselfe with, and using all his corporall and spirituall parts, in rule and right. The fantastickall and imaginary, and false privileges, which man hath usurped unto himselfe, to sway, to appoint, and to establish, he hath absolutely renounced and quit them. Yet is there no Sect, but is enforced to allow her wise Sectary, in chiefe to follow diverse things nor comprized nor perceived, nor allowed, if he will live. And if he take shipping, he followes his purpose, not knowing whether it shall be profitable or no: and yeeldes to this, that the shippe is good, that the pilote is skilfull, and that the season is fit; circumstances only probable; After which he is bound to goe, and suffer himselfe to be removed by apparances alwaies provided they have no expresse contrariety in them. Hee hath a body, he hath a soule,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

his senses urge him forward, his mind moveth him. Although he finde not this proper and singular marke of judging in himselfe, and that hee perceive he should not engage his consent, seeing some falshood may be like unto this truth: He ceaseth not to [direct] the offices of his life fully and commodiously. How many arts are there, which professe to consist more in conjecture, than in the science; That distinguish not betweene truth and falshood, but onely follow seeming? There is both true and false (say they) and there are meanes in us to seeke it out, but not to stay it when we touch it. It is better for us to suffer the order of the world to manage us without further inquisition. A mind warranted from prejudice, hath a marvellous preferment to tranquility. *Men that sentence and controule their judges, doe never duly submit themselves unto them.* How much more docile and tractable are simple and uncurious mindes found both towards the lawes of religion and Politike decrees, than these over-vigilant and nice wits, teachers of divine and humane causes? There is nothing in mans invention, wherein is so much likelyhood, possibilitie and profit. This representeth man bare and naked, acknowledging his naturall weakenesse, apt to receive from above some strange power, disfurnished of all humane knowledge, and so much the more fitte to harbour divine understanding, disannulling his judgement, that so he may give more place unto faith: Neither misbeleeving nor establishing any doctrine or opinion repugnant unto common lawes and observances, humble, obedient, disciplinable and studious; a sworne enemy to Heresie, and by consequence exempting himselfe from all vaine and irreligious opinions, invented and brought up by false Sects. It is a white sheet prepared to take from the finger of God what form soever it shall please him to imprint therein. *The more we addresse and commit our selves to God,*

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

and reject our selves, the better it is for us, Accept (saith *Ecclesiastes*) in good part things both in shew and taste, as from day to day they are presented unto thee, the rest is beyond thy knowledge. *Domini novit cogitationes hominum, quoniam vane sunt* (*Psal. xciii. 11*). *The Lord knowes the thoughts of men, though they are vayne.* See how of three generall Sects of Philosophie, two make expresse profession of doubt and ignorance; and in the third, which is the Dogmatists, it is easie to be discerned, that the greatest number have taken the face of assurance; onely because they could set a better countenance on the matter. They have not so much gone about to establish any certainty in us, as to shew how far they had waded in seeking out the truth. *Quam doc fingunt magis quam norunt.* Which the learned do rather conceit, than know.

*Tymæus*, being to instruct *Socrates*, of what he knowes of the Gods, of the world and of men, proposes to speake of it, as one man to another; and that it sufficeth, if his reasons be as probable to another mans: For, exact reasons are neither in his hands, nor in any mortall man: which one of his Sectaries hath thus imitated: *Ut potero, explicabo; nec tamen, ut Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint et fixa, quæ dixerō; sed, ut homunculus, probabilia conjectur sequens* (*Cic. Tusc. Qu. i.*). *As I can, I will explain them; yet not as Apollo giving oracles, that all should be certaine and set downe, that I say, but as a mean man, who followes likelihood by his conjecture.* And that upon the discourse of the contempt of death is a naturall and popular discourse. Elsewhere he hath translated it, upon *Platoes* very words. *forte, de Deorum natura ortuque mundi disserent minus quod habemus in animo consequimur, haec erit mirum. Æquum est enim meminisse, et me, quod disseram, hominem esse, et vos qui judicetis: ut, si pr*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*babilia dicentur, nihil ultra requiratis (Cic. Univers.).* It will be no marvell, if arguing of the nature of Gods and originall of the world, we scarcely reach to that which in our minde we comprehend; for it is meet we remember, that both I am a man, who am to argue, and you who are to judge, so as you seeke no further, if I speake but things likely. Aristotle ordinarily hoardeth us up a number of other opinions, and other beleeves, that so he may compare his unto it, and make us see how farre he hath gone further, and how neere he comes unto true-likelihood; For truth is not judged by authoritie, nor by others testimonie. And therefore did *Epicurus* religiously avoyd to aleadge any in his compositions. He is the Prince of Dogmatists, and yet we learne of him, that, to know much, breedes an occasion to doubt more. He is often scene seriously to shelter himselfe under so inextricable obscuritie that his meaning cannot be perceived. In effect, it is a *Pyrrhonisme* under a resolving forme. Listen to *Ciceroes* protestation, who doth declare us others fantasies by his owne. *Qui requirunt, quid de quaque re ipsi sentiamus; curiosius id faciunt, quam necesse est. Hæc in Philosophia ratio, contra omnia disserendi nullamque rem aperte judicandi, profecta à Socrate, repetita ab Arcesila, confirmata à Carneade usque ad nostram viget ætatem. Hi sumus, qui omnibus veris falsa quædam adjuncta esse dicamus, tanta similitudine, ut in iis nulla insit certe judicandi et assentiendi nota (Cic. Nat. Deo. i.).* They that would know what we conceit of every thing, use more curiosity than needs. This course in Philosophy to dispute against all things, to judge expresly of nothing, derived from *Socrates*, renewed by *Arcesilas*, confirmed by *Carneades*, is in force till our time; we are those that aver some falshood entermixt with every truth, and that with such likeness, as there is no set note in those things for any assuredly to give judgement or

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*assent.* Why hath not *Aristotle* alone, but the greatest number of Philosophers affected difficulty, unlesse it be to make the vanity of the subject to prevaile, and to amuse the curiosity of our minde, seeking to feed it, by gnawing so raw and bare a bone? *Clytomachus* affirmed, that he could never understand by the writings of *Carneades*, what opinion he was of. Why hath *Epicurus* interdicted facility unto his Sectaries? And wherefore hath *Heraclitus* beene surnamed σκοτεινός, a darke mysty clouded fellow? Difficulty is a coine, that wisemen make use of, as juglers doe with passe and repasse, because they will not display the vanity of their art, and wherewith humane foolishnesse is easily apaid.

*Clarus ob obscurum linguam, magis inter inanes,  
Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,  
Inversis quæ sub verbis latitantia cernunt.*

—Luc. i. 656

For his darke speech much prais'd, but of th' unwise;  
For fooles doe all still more admire and prize,  
That under words turn'd topsie-turvie lies,

*Cicero* reproveth some of his friends, because they were wont to bestow more time about Astrology, Law, Logike, and Geometry, than such Arts could deserve; and diverted them from the devoirs of their life, more profitable and more honest. The *Cyrenaike* Philosophers equally contemned naturall Philosophy and Logicke. *Zeno* in the beginning of his bookes of the Common-wealth declared all the liberall Sciences to be unprofitable. *Chrysippus* said that which *Plato* and *Aristotle* had written of Logike, they had written the same in jest and for exercise sake; and could not beleieve that ever they spake in good earnest of so vaine and idle a subject. *Plutarke* saith the same of the Metaphysikes; *Epicurus* would have said it of Rethorike, of Grammar, of Poesie, of



## THE SECOND BOOKE

the Mathematickes, and (except naturall Philosophy) of all other sciences: And *Socrates* of all; but of the Art of civill manners and life. Whatsoever he was demanded of any man, he would ever first enquire of him, to give an accompt of his life, both present and past: which he would seriously examine and judge of: Deeming all other apprenticeships as subsequents and of supererogation in regard of that. *Parum mihi placeant eæ literæ quæ ad virtutem doctoribus nihil profuerunt.* That learning pleaseth me but a little which nothing profiteth the teachers of it unto vertue. Most of the Arts have thus beene condemned by knowledge it selfe: For they thought it not amisse to exercise their mindes in matters wherein was no profitable solidity. As for the rest, some have judged *Plato* a Dogmatist, others a Doubter, some a Dogmatist in one thing and some a Doubter, in another. *Socrates*, the fore-man of his Dialogues doth ever aske and propose his Disputation; yet never concluding, nor ever satisfying: and saith, he hath no other Science, but that of opposing. Their Author *Homer* hath equally grounded the foundations of all Sects of Philosophy, thereby to shew, how indifferent he was which way we went. Some say, that of *Plato* arose ten diverse Sects. And as I thinke, never was instruction wavering and nothing avouching, if his be not. *Socrates* was wont to say, that when Midwives begin once to put in practice the trad to make other women bring forth children, themselves become barren. That he by the title of wise, which the gods had conferred upon him, had also in his man-like and mentall love shaken off the faculty of begetting: Being well pleased to afford all helpe and favor to such as were engendrers; to open their nature, to suple their passages, to ease the issue of their child-bearing, to judge thereof, to baptise the same, to foster it, to strengthen it, to swathe it, and to cir-

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

cumcise it; exercising and handling his instrument at the perill and fortune of others. So is it with most Authors of this third kinde, as the ancients have well noted by the writings of *Anaxagoras*, *Democritus*, *Parmenides*, *Xenophanes*, and others. They have a manner of writing doubtfull both in substance and intent, rather enquiring than instructing: albeit here and there, they enterlace their stile with dogmaticall cadences. And is not that as well seene in *Seneca*, and in *Plutarke*? How much doe they speake sometimes of one face, and sometimes of another, for such as looke neere unto it? Those who reconcile Lawyers, ought first to have reconciled them every one unto himselfe. *Plato* hath (in my seeming) loved this manner of Philosophying, Dialogue wise in good earnest, that therby he might more decently place in sundry mouthes the diversity and variation of his owne conceits. *Diversly to treat of matters is as good and better as to treat them conformably*; that is to say, more copiously and more profitably. Let us take example by our selves. Definite sentences make the last period of dogmaticall and resolving speech: yet see we, that those which our Parlements present unto our people, as the most exemplare and fittest to nourish in them the reverence they owe unto this dignitie, especialy by reason of the sufficiencie of those persons, which exercise the same, taking their glory, not by the conclusion, which to them is dayly, and is common to al judges as much as the debating of diverse, and agitations of contrary reasonings of law causes will admit. And the largest scope for reprehensions of some Philosophers against others, draweth contradictions and diversities with it, wherein every one of them findeth himselfe so entangled, either by intent to shew the wavering of mans minde above all matters, or ignorantly forced by the volubilitie

## THE SECOND BOOKE

and incomprehensiblenesse of all matters: What meaneth this burdon? *In a slippery and gliding place let us suspend our beliefe*, For as *Euripides* saith,

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Les œuvres de Dieu en diverses  
Façons, nous donnent des traverses.*

Gods workes doe travers our imaginations,  
And crosse our workes in divers different fashions.

Like unto that which *Empedocles* was wont often to scatter amongst his bookes, as moved by a divine furie and forced by truth. No no, we feel nothing, we see nothing; all things are hid from us: There is not one, that we may establish, how and what it is: But returning to this holy word. *Cogitationes mortalium timidae et incertae ad inventiones nostrae, et providentiae* (*Wisd. c. ix. 14*). *The thoughts of mortal men are feareful, our devices and foresights are uncertaine.* It must not be thought strange if men disparing of the goale have yet taken pleasure in the chase of it; studie being in it selfe a pleasing occupation, yea so pleasing, that amid sensualities, the Stoikes forbid also that which comes from the exercise of the minde, and require a bridle to it, and finde intemperance in over much knowledge. *Democritus* having at his table eaten some figges that tasted of hony, began presently in his minde to seeke out whence this unusuall sweetnes in them might proceed; and to be resolved, rose from the board, to view the place where those figges had beene gathered. His maide servant noting this alteration in her master, smilingly said unto him, that he should no more busie himselfe about it; the reason was, she had laide them in a vessell where hony had beene; whereat he seemed to be wroth in that shee had deprived him of the occasion of his intended search, and robbed his curiositie of matter to worke upon. Away (quoth



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

he) unto her, thou hast much offended mee; yet will I not omit to finde out the cause, as if it were naturally so. Who perhaps would not have missed to finde some likely or true reason, for a false and supposed effect. This storie of a famous and great Philosopher doth evidently represent unto us this studious passion, which so doth amuse us in pursuit of things, of whose obtaining wee despaire. *Plutarke* reporteth a like example of one who would not bee resolved of what he doubted, because hee would not lose the pleasure hee had in seeking it: As another, that would not have his Physitian remove the thirst he felt in his ague, because he would not lose the pleasure he tooke in quenching the same with drinking. *Satius est supervacua discere, quam nihil* (SEN. *Epist.* 89 f.). *It is better to learne more than wee need, than nothing at all.* Even as in all feeding, pleasure is alwayes alone and single; and all we take that is pleasant is not ever nourishing and wholesome: So likewise, what our minde draws from learning leaveth not to be voluptuous, although it neither nourish nor be wholesome. Note what their saying is: *The consideration of nature is a food proper for our mindes, it raiseth and puffeth us up, it makes us by the comparison of heavenly and high things to disdain base and low matters: the search of hidden and great causes is very pleasant, yea unto him that attaines nought but the reverence and feare to judge of them,* These are the very words of their profession. The vaine image of this crazed curiositie is more manifestly seene in this other example, which they for honour-sake have so often in their mouths. *Eudoxus* wished, and praid to the Gods, that he might once view the Sunne neere at hand, to comprehend his forme, his greatnesse and his beautie; on condition he might immediately be burnt and consumed by it.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

Thus with the price of his owne life would he attaine a Science, whereof both use and possession shall therewith bee taken from him: and for so sudden and fleeting knowledge, lose and forgoe all the knowledges he either now hath, or ever hereafter may have. I can not easily be perswaded, that *Epicurus*, *Plato*, or *Pythagoras* have sold us their Atomes, their Ideas, and their Numbers for ready payment. They were over wise to establish their articles of faith upon things so uncertaine and disputable. But in this obscuritie and ignorance of the world, each of these notable men hath endeavoured to bring some kinde of shew or image of light; and have busied their mindes about inventions that might at least have a pleasing and wilie appearance, provided notwithstanding it were false; it might be maintained against contrary oppositions: *Unicuique ista pro ingenio finguntur, non ex Scientia* vi. *These things are conceived by every man as his wit serves, not as his knowledge stretches and reaches.* An ancient Phylosopher being blamed for professing that Philosophie, whereof, in his judgment hee made no esteeme: answered, that that was true Philosophizing. They have gone about to consider all, to ballance all, and have found that it was an occupation fitting the naturall curiositie which is in us. Some things they have written for the behoofe of common societie, as their religions: And for this consideration was it reasonable, that they would not thoroughly unfold common opinions, that so they might not breed trouble in the obedience of lawes and customes of their countries. *Plato* treateth this mysterie in a very manifest kinde of sport. For, where he writeth according to himselfe, he prescribeth nothing for certaintie: When he institutes a Law giver, he borroweth a very swaying and avouching kinde of stile: Wherein he boldly entermingleth his most fantastieall

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

opinions; as profitable to perswade the common sort, as ridiculous to perswade himselfe: Knowing how apt wee are to receive all impressions, and chiefly the most wicked and enormous. And therefore is he very carefull in his lawes that nothing bee sung in publike but Poesies; the fabulous fictions of which tend to some profitable end: being so apt to imprint all manner of illusion in mans minde, that it is injustice not to feed them rather with commodious lies, than with lies either unprofitable or damageable. He flatly saith in his Common-wealth, that for the benefit of men, it is often necessarie to deceive them. It is easie to distinguish, how some Sects have rather followed truth, and some profit; by which the latter have gained credit. It is the miserie of our condition, that often what offers it selfe unto our imagination for the likeliest, presents not it selfe unto it for the most beneficiall unto our life. The boldest sects, both *Epicurian*, *Pirrhonian* and new *Academike*, when they have cast their acoumpt, are compelled to stoope to the civill law. There are other subjects, which they have tossed, some on the left and some on the right hand, each one labouring and striving to give it some semblance, were it right or wrong: For, having found nothing so secret, whereof they have not attempted to speake, they are many times forced to forge divers feeble and fond conjectures: Not that themselves tooke them for a ground-worke, nor to establish a truth, but for an exercise of their studie. *Non tam id sensisse, quod dicerent, quam exercere ingenia materiæ difficultate videntur voluisse.* They seeme not so much to have thought as they said, as rather willing to exercise their wits in the difficulty of the matter. And if it were not so taken, how should we cloke so great an inconstancie, varietie and vanity of opinions, which we see to have beene produced by these excellent and admirable spirits?

## THE SECOND BOOKE

as for example, *What greater vanitie can there be, than to goe about by our proportions and conjectures to guesse at God? And to governe both him and the world according to our capacitie and lawes?* And to use this small scantlin of sufficiencie, which he hath pleased to impart unto our naturall condition, to the cost and charges of divinitie? And because we cannot extend our sight so farre as his glorious throne, to have removed him downe to our corruption and miseries? Of all humane and ancient opinions concerning religion, I thinke that to have had more clemency and excuse, which knowledged and confessed God to be an incomprehensible power, chiefe beginning and preserver of all things; all goodnes, all perfection; accepting in good part the honour and reverence which mortall men did yeeld him, under that usage, name and manner soever it was.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Jupiter omnipotens rerum, regumque, Deumque,  
Progenitor, genitrixque.*

Almightie Jove, is parent said to be  
Of things, of Kings, of Gods, both he and she.

This zeale hath universally beene regarded of heaven with a gentle and gracious eye. All Policies have reaped some fruit by their devotion: Men, and pious actions have every where had correspondent events. Heathen histories acknowledge dignitie, order, justice, prodigies, and oracles, employed for their benefit and instruction, in their fabulous religion: God of his mercy daining peradventure, to enter by his temporall blessings the budding and tender beginnings of such a brute knowledge, as naturall reason gave them of him, athwart the false images of their deluding dreames: Not only false, but impious and injurious are those, which man hath forged and devised by his owne invention. And of religions Saint *Paul* found in credit at *Athens*, that



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

which they had consecrated unto a certaine hidden and unknowne divinitie, seemed to be most excusable, *Pythagoras* shadowed the truth somewhat neerer, judgeing that the knowledge of this first cause and *Ens entium* must be undefined, without any prescription or declaration. That it was nothing else but the extreme indeavour of our imagination, toward perfection, every one amplifying the Idea thereof according to his capacitie. But if *Numa* undertooke to conforme the devotion of his people to this project, to joyne the same to a religion meerly mentall, without any prefixt object or materiall mixture, he undertooke a matter to no use. *Mans minde could never be maintained, if it were still floting up and downe in this infinite deepe of shapeles conceits.* They must be framed unto her to some image, according to her model. The majesty of God hath in some sort suffered it selfe to be circumscribed to corporall limits: *His supernaturall and celestiall Sacraments beare signes of our terrestriall condition.* His adoration is exprest by offices and sensible words; for, it is man that beleeveth and praieth. I omit other arguments, that are emplyed about this subject. But I could hardly be made beleieve, that the sight of our Crucifixes, and pictures of that pittiful torment, that the ornaments and ceremonious motions in our Churches, that the voyces accomodated and suted to our thoughts-devotions, and this stirring of our senses, doth not greatly inflame the peoples souls, with a religious passion of wonderous beneficiall good. Of those, to which they have given bodies, as necessity required amid this generall blindness; as for me, I should rather have taken part with those who worshipped the Sunne.

—la lumière commune,  
L'œil du monde : et si Dieu au chef porte des yeux,  
Les rayons du Soleil sont ses yeux radieux,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Qui donnent vie à tous, nous maintiennent et gürdent,  
Et les faicts des humains en ce monde regardent :  
Ce beau, ce grand Soleil, qui nous fait les saysons,  
Selon qu'il entre ou sort de ses douze maysons :  
Qui remplit l'univers de ses vertus cognees,  
Qui d'un traict de ses yeux nous dissipe les nues :  
L'esprit, l'ame du monde, ardent et flamboyant,  
En la course d'un jour tout le Ciel tournoyant,  
Plein d'immense grandeur, rond, vagabond et ferme :  
Lequel tient dessous luy tout le monde pour terme,  
En repos sans repos, oysif, et sans sejour,  
Fils aimè de nature, et le pere du jour.*

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

The common light,  
The worlds eye: and if God beare eyes in his cheefe head,  
His most resplendent eyes, the Sunne-beames may be said,  
Which unto all give life, which us maintaine and guard,  
And in this world of men, the workes of men regard,  
This great, this beauteous Sunne, which us our seasons makes,  
As in twelve houses he, ingresse or egresse takes ;  
Who with his Vertues knowne, doth fill this universe  
With one cast of his eyes doth us all clowds disperse,  
The spirit, and the soule of this world, flaming, burning,  
Round about heav'n in course of one dayes journey turning  
Of endlesse greatnesse full, round, moveable and fast :  
Who all the world for bounds beneath himselfe hath pla'st :  
In rest, without rest, and still more staid, without stay,  
Of Nature th' eldest Childe, and father of the day.

Forasmuch as besides this greatnesse and matchlesse beautie of his, it is the only glorious piece of this vaste-worlds-frame, which we perceiue to be furthest from us: And by that meane so little known, as they are pardonable, that entered into admiration, and reverence of it. *Thales*, who was the first to enquire and finde out this matter, esteemed God to bee a spirit, who made all things of water. *Anaximander* thought the Gods did dy, and were new borne at divers seasons: and that the worlds were infinite in number. *Anaximenes* deemed the ayre to be a God, which was created immense, and alwaies moving. *Anaxagoras* was the first that held the description and manner of all things, to be directed by the power and reason of a spirit infinit. *Alcmaeon* hath ascribed



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Divinity unto the Sunne, unto the Moone, unto Stars, and unto the Soule. *Pythagoras* hath made God, a spirit dispersed through the Nature of all things, whence our soules are derived. *Parmenides*, a Circle circumpassing the heavens, and by the heat of light maintaining the world. *Empedocles* said, the foure Natures, whereof all things are made, to be Gods. *Protagoras*, that he had nothing to say, whether they were or were not, or what they were. *Democritus* would sometimes say, that the images and their circutations were Gods, and othertimes this Nature, which disperseth these images; and then our knowledge and intelligence. *Plato* scattereth his beliefe after diverse semblances. In his *Tymeus*, he saith, that the worlds-father could not be named. In his *Lawes*, that his being must not be enquired after. And else-where in the said bookes, he maketh the world, the heaven, the starres, the earth and our soules, to be Gods; and besides, admitteth those that by ancient institutions have beene received in every Common-wealth. *Xenophon* reporteth a like difference of *Socrates* his discipline. Sometimes that Gods forme ought not to be inquired after; then he makes him infer, that the Sunne is a God, and the Soule a God: othertimes, that there is but one, and then more. *Speusippus* Nephew unto *Plato*, makes God to be a certaine power, governing all things, and having a soule. *Aristotle* saith sometimes that it is the spirit, and sometimes the world; othertimes he appoynteth another ruler over this world, and sometimes he makes God to be the heat of heaven. *Xenocrates* makes eight; five named amongst the planets, the sixth composed of all the fixed starres, as of his owne members; the seaventh and eight, the Sunne and the Moone. *Heraclides Ponticus* doth but roame among his opinions, and in fine depriveth God of sense, and maks him remove and transchange



## THE SECOND BOOKE

himself from one form to another; and then saith, that is both heaven and earth. *Theophrastus* in all his fantazies wandereth still in like irresolutions, attributing the worlds superintendency now to the intelligence, now to the heaven, and now to the starres. *Strato*, that it is Nature having power to engender, to augment and to diminish, without forme or sense. *Zeno*, the naturall Lawe, commaunding the good, and prohibiting the evil; which Lawe is a breathing creature; and removeth the accustomed Gods, *Jupiter*, *Juno* and *Vesta*. *Diogenes Apolloniates*, that it is Age. *Xenophanes* makes God, round, seeing, hearing not breathing, and having nothing common with humane Nature. *Aristo* deemeth the forme of God to bee incomprehensible, and depriveth him of senses, and wotteth not certainly whether he bee a breathing soule or something else. *Cleanthes*, sometimes reason, othertimes the World, now the soule of Nature, and otherwhile the supreme heat, enfoulding and containing all. *Persæus Zenoës* disciple hath beene of opinion, that they were surnamed Gods, who had brought some notable good or benefit unto humane life, or had invented profitable things. *Chrysippus* made a confused huddle of all the foresaid sentences, and amongst a thousand formes of the Gods, which he faineth, hee also accompteth those men that are immortalized. *Diagoras* and *Theodorus*, flatly denyed, that there were anie Gods: *Epicurus* makes the Gods, bright-shining, transparent and perflable, placed as it were betweene two Forts, betweene two Worlds, safely sheltered from all blowes, invested with a humane shape, and with our members, which unto them are of no use.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Ego Deum genus esse semper duxi, et dicam cælitum,  
Sed eos non curare opinor, quid agat humanum genus.*

—ENN., CICE. Div. ii.

I still thought and wil say, of Gods there is a kinde;  
But what our mankinde doth, I thinke they nothing minde.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Trust to your Philosophie, boast to have hit the naile on the head; or to have found out the beane of this Cake, to see this coile and hurly-burly of so many Philosophical wits. The trouble or confusion of worldly shapes and formes hath gotten this of mee, that customes and conceits differing from mine, doe not so much dislike me, as instruct me; and at what time I conferre or compare them together, they doe not so much puffe me up with pride, as humble me with lowlinesse. And each other choyce, except that which commeth from the expresse hand of God, seemeth to me a choyce of small prerogative or consequence. The worlds policies are no lesse contrary one to another in this subject, than the schooles: Wherby we may learne, that Fortune herself is no more divers, changing and variable, than our reason, nor more blinde and inconsiderat. Things most unknowne are fittest to bee deified. Wherefore, to make gods of our selves (as antiquitie hath done,) it exceeds the extreme weaknesse of discourse. I would rather have folowed those that worshipped the Serpent, the Dogge and the Oxe, forsomuch as their Nature, and being is least knowne to us; and we may more lawfully imagine what we list of those beasts and ascribe extraordinarie faculties unto them. But to have made Gods of our condition, whose imperfections we should know, and to have attributed desire, choler, revenge, marriages, generation, alliances, love and jealousie, our limbes and our bones, our infirmities, our pleasures, our deathes, and our Sepulchres unto them, hath of necessity proceeded from a meere and egregious sottishnesse, or drunkennesse of mans wit.

*Quæ procul usque adeo divino ab numine distant.  
Inque Deum numero quæ sint indigna videri.*—LUCR. v. 123.

Which from Divinity so distant are,  
To stand in ranke of Gods unworthy farre.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Formæ, ætates, vestitus, ornatus noti sunt: genera, conjugia, cognationes, omniaque traducta ad similitudinem imbecillitatis humanæ: nam et perturbatis animis inducuntur, accipimus enim Deorum cupiditates, ægritudines, iracundias. Their shapes, their ages, their apparrell, their furnitures are knowen; their kindes, their marriages, their kindred, and all translated to the likenesse of mans weaknesse: For they are also brought in with mindes much troubled: for we reade of the lustfulnesse, the grievings, the angerinesse of the Gods. As to have ascribed Divinity, not only unto faith, vertue, honour, concord, liberty, victory and piety; but also unto voluptuousnesse, fraud, death, envy, age and misery; yea unto feare, unto ague, and unto evill fortune, and such other injuries and wrongs to our fraile and transitory life.*

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Quid juret hoc, templis nostros inducere mores?  
O curse in terris animæ et celestium inanes!*

—PERS. Sat. ii. 62, 61.

What boots it, into Temples to bring manners of our kindes?  
O crooked soules on earth, and void of heavenly mindes.

The Egyptians with an impudent wisdom forbade upon paine of hanging, that no man should dare to say, that *Serapis* and *Isis* their Gods, had whilome beene but men, when all knew they had beene so. And their images or pictures drawne with a finger a crosse their mouthes imported (as *Varro* saith) this misterious rule unto their priests, to conceale their mortall off-spring, which by a necessary reason disannulled all their veneration. Since man desired so much to equall himselfe to God, it had beene better for him (saith *Cicero*,) to draw those divine conditions unto himselfe, and bring them downe to earth, than to send his corruption, and place his misery above in heaven: but to take him aright, he



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

hath divers wayes, and with like vanitie of opinion, done both the one and other. When Philosophers blazon and display the Hierarchy of their gods, and to the utmost of their skill endeavour to distinguish their aliances, their charges, and their powers. I cannot beleeeve they speake in good earnest when *Plato* decyphreth unto us the orchard of *Pluto*, and the commodities or corporall paines, which even after the ruine and consumption of our body, waite for us, and applyeth them to the apprehension or feeling we have in this life.

*Secreti celant colles, et myrtia circum  
Sylvæ tegit, curæ non ipsa in morte relinquunt.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vi. 443.

Them paths aside conceale, a mirtle grove  
Shades them round; cares in death doe not remove.

When *Mahomet* promiseth unto his followers a paradise all tapistred, adorned with gold and precious stones, peopled with exceeding beauteous damsels, stored with wines and singular cates. I well perceive they are but scoffers, which sute and apply themselves unto our foolishnesse, thereby to enhonny and allure us to these opinions and hopes fitting our mortall appetite. Even so are some of our men falne into like errors by promising unto themselves after their resurrection a terrestriall and temporall life, accompanied with al sorts of pleasures and worldly commodities. Shall we thinke that *Plato*, who had so heavenly conceptions, and was so well acquainted with Divinity, as of most he purchased the surname of Divine, was ever of opinion, that man (this seely and wretched creature man) had any one thing in him, which might in any sort be applied, and suted to this incomprehensible and unspeakable power? or ever imagined, that our languishing hold-fasts were capable, or the vertue of

## THE SECOND BOOKE

our understanding of force, to participate or be partakers, either of the blessednesse, or eternall punishment! He ought in the behalfe of humane reason be answered: If the pleasures, thou promisest us in the other life, are such as I have felt here below, they have nothing in them common with infinity. If all my five naturall senses were even surcharged with joy and gladnesse, and my soule possessed with all the contents and delights, it could possibly desire or hope for (and we know what it either can wish or hope for) yet were [it] nothing. If there bee any thing that is mine, then is there nothing that is Divine; if it be nothing else, but what may appertaine unto this our present condition, it may not be accounted of. *All mortall mens contentment is mortall.* The acknowledging of our parents, of our children and of our friends, if it cannot touch, move or tickle us in the other world, if we still take hold of such a pleasure, we continue in Terrestrial and transitorie commodities. We can not worthily conceive of these high, mysterious, and divine promises; if wee can but in any sort conceive them, and so imagine them aright: they must be thought to be inimaginable, unspeakable and incomprehensible, and absolutely and perfectly other than those of our miserable experience. No eye can behold, (saith Saint Paul) *The hap that God prepareth for his elect, nor can it possibly enter the heart of man* (1 Cor. ii. 9). And if to make us capable of it (as thou saith Plato by thy purifications) our being is reformed and essence changed, it must be by so extreme and universall a change, that according to Philosophicall doctrine, we shall be no more our selves:

*Hector erat tunc cum bello certabat, at ille*

*Tractus ab Emonio non erat Hector equo.*

—Ovid, *Trist.* iii. *Fl.* xi. 27.

Hector he was, when he in fight us'd force;

Hector he was not, drawne by th' enemies horse.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER XII it shall be some other thing, that shall receive these recompences.

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*quod mutatur, dissolvitur, interit ergo :*

*Trajiciuntur enim partes atque ordine migrant.*

—LUCR. iii. 781.

What is chang'd, is dissolved, therefore dies :

Translated parts in order fall and rise.

For, in the *Metempsychosis*, or transmigration of soules of *Pythagoras*, and the change of habitation, which he imagined the soules to make; shall we thinke that the Lion in whom abideth the soule of *Cæsar*, doth wed the passions which concerned *Cæsar*, or that it is hee? And if it were hee, those had some reason, who debating this opinion against *Plato*, object that the sonne might one day bee found committing with his mother under the shape of a Mules body, and such like absurdities. And shall wee imagine, that in the transmigrations which are made from the bodies of some creatures into others of the same kind, the new succeeding-ones are not other, than their predecessors were? Of a Phenix cinders, first (as they say) is engendred a worme and then another Phenix: who can imagine that this second Phenix be no other and different from the first? Our Silk-wormes are seene to dye and then to wither drie, and of that body breedeth a Butter-flie, and of that a worme, were it not ridiculous to thinke, the same to be the first Silke-worm? what hath once lost his being, is no more.

*Nec si materiam nostram collegerit ætas*

*Post obitum, rursumque redegerit, ut sita nunc est*

*Atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitæ,*

*Pertineat quidquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum,*

*Interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostra.—Ib. 890.*

If time should recollect, when life is past,

Our stuffe, and it replace, as now tis plac't,

And light of life were granted us againe,

Yet nothing would that deed to us pertaine,

When interrupted were our turne againe.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

And *Plato*, when in another place thou saist, that it shall be the spirituall part of man that shall enjoy the recompences of the other life, thou tellest of things of as small likely-hood.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Scilicet avulsis radicibus ut nequit ullam  
Displicere ipse oculus rem seorsum corpore toto.*

—*Ib.* 580.

Ev'n as no eye, by th' root's pull'd-out can see  
Ought in whole body severall to bee.

For, by this reckoning, it shall no longer be man, nor consequently us, to whom this enjoying shall appertain; for we are built of two principall essentiall parts, the separation of which, is the death and consummation of our being.

*Inter enim jacta est vitæ causa vageque  
Deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes.*—*Ib.* 903.

A pause of life is interpos'd; from sense  
All motions straid are, far wandring thence.

we doe not say, that man suffereth, when the wormes gnaw his body and limbs whereby he lived, and that the earth consumeth them.

*Et nihil hoc ad nos, qui coitu conjugioque  
Corporis atque animæ consistimus uniter apti.*—*Ibid.* 888.

This nought concern's us, who consist of union,  
Of minde and body joyn'd in meet communion.

Moreover, upon what ground of their justice, can the Gods reward man and be thankfull unto him after his death, for his good and vertuous actions, since themselves addressed and bred them in him? And wherefore are they offended, and revenge his vicious deeds, when themselves have created him with so defective a condition, and that but with one twinkling of their will, they may hinder him from sinning? Might not *Epicurus* with some shew of humane reason object that

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

unto *Plato*, if he did not often shrowd himselfe under this sentence; That it is impossible by mortall nature to establish any certainty of the immortall. Shee is ever straying, but especially when she medleth with divine matters. Who feeles it more evidently than we? For, although we have ascribed unto her assured and infallible principles, albeit wee enlighten her steps with the holy lampe of that truth, which God hath beene pleased to impart unto us, we notwithstanding see daily, how little soever she stray from the ordinary path, and that she start or stragle out of the way, traced and measured out by the Church, how soone she loseth, entangleth and confoundeth her selfe; turning, tossing and floating up and downe, in this vast, troublesome and tempestuous sea of mans opinions, without restraint or scope. So soone as she loseth this high and common way, shee divideth and scattereth her selfe a thousand diverse wayes. Man can be no other than he is, nor imagine but according to his capacity: It is greater presumption (saith *Plutarch*) in them that are but men, to attempt to reason and discourse of Gods, and of demi-Gods, than in a man meerly ignorant of musicke, to judge of those that sing; or for a man, that was never in warres, to dispute of Armes and warre, presuming by some light conjecture, to comprehend the effects of an art altogether beyond his skill. As I thinke, Antiquity imagined it did something for divine Majesty, when shee compared the same unto man, attiring her with his faculties, and enriching her with his strange humours, and most shamefull necessities: offering her some of our cates to feed upon, and some of our dances, mummeries, and enterludes to make her merry, with our clothes to apparrell her; and our houses to lodge her, cherishing her with the sweet odors of incense, and sounds of musicke, adorning her with garlands and flowers, and to draw her to our



## THE SECOND BOOKE

vicious passion, to flatter her justice with an inhumane revenge, gladding her with the ruine and dissipation of things created and preserved by her. As *Tiberius Sempronius*, who for a sacrifice to *Vulcan*, caused the rich spoiles and armes, which he had gotten of his enemies in *Sardinia*, to be burned: And *Paulus Emilius*, those he had obtained in *Macedonia*, to *Mars* and *Minerva*. And *Alexander* comming to the Ocean of India, cast in favour of *Thetis* many great rich vessels of gold into the Sea, replenishing moreover her Altars with a butcherly slaughter, not onely of innocent beasts, but of men, as diverse Nations, and amongst the rest, ours were wont to doe. And I thinke none hath beene exempted from shewing the like Essayes.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*Sulmone creatos*

*Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem, quos educat Ufens,  
Viventes rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris.*

—*VIRG. ÆN. x. 517.*

Four young-men borne of *Sulmo*, and four more  
Whom *Ufens* bred, he living over-bore,  
Whom he to his dead friend  
A sacrifice might send.

The *Getes* deeme themselves immortall, and their death but the beginning of a journey to their God *Zamolxis*. From five to five yeares, they dispatch some one among themselves toward him, to require him of necessarie things. This deputy of theirs is chosen by lots; And the manner to dispatch him, after they have by word of mouth instructed him of his charge, is that amongst those which assist his election, three hold so many javelins upright, upon which the others by meere strength of armes, throw him; if he chance to sticke upon them in any mortall place, and that he dye suddenly, it is to them an assured argument of divine favour; but if he escape, they deeme him a wicked and execrable man, and



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

then chuse another. *Amestris* mother unto *Xerxes*, being become aged, caused at one time 14. young striplings of the noblest houses of *Persia* (following the religion of her cuntry) to be buried all alive, thereby to gratifie some God of under earth. Even at this day the Idols of *Temiaritan* are cimented with the bloud of young children, and love no sacrifice but of such infant and pure soules: Oh justice greedy of the bloud of innocencie.

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

—*Lucr.* i. 102.

Religion so much mischeefe could  
Perswade, where it much better should.

The Carthaginians were wont to sacrifice their owne children unto *Saturne*, and who had none, was faine to buy some: and their fathers and mothers were enforced in their proper persons, with cheerefull and pleasant countenance to assist that office. It was a strange conceit, with our owne affliction to goe about to please and appay divine goodnesse. As the Lacedemonians, who flattered and wantonized their *Diana*, by torturing of yong boyes, whom often in favour of her they caused to be whipped to death. It was a savage kinde of humor, to thinke to gratifie the Architect with the subversion of his architecture: and to cancel the punishment due unto the guiltie, by punishing the guiltles, and to imagine that poore *Iphigenia*, in the port of *Aulis*, should by her death and sacrifice discharge and expiate, towards God, the Grecians armie of the offences, which they had committed.

*Et casta incestè nubendi tempore in ipso*

*Hostia concideret mactatu mæsta parentis.*—*Ibid.* 99.

She, a chaste offering, griev'd incestuously  
By fathers stroke, when she should wed, to dye.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

And those two noble and generous soules of the *Decii*, father and sonne, to reconcile, and appease the favour of the Gods, towards the Romanes affaires, should headlong cast their bodies athwart the thickest throng of their enemies. *Quæ fuit tanta Deorum iniquitas, ut placari populo Romano non possint, nisi tales viri occidissent?* What injustice of the Gods was so great, as they could not be appeased, unlesse such men perished? Considering that it lies not in the offender to cause himselfe to be whipped, how and when he list, but in the judge, who accompteth nothing a right punishment, except the torture he appointeth; and cannot impute that unto punishment, which is in the free choice of him that suffereth. The divine vengeance presupposeth our full dissent, for his justice and our paine. And ridiculous was that humor of *Polycrates*, the tyrant of *Samos*, who to interrupt the course of his continuall happinesse, and to recompence it, cast the richest and most precious jewell he had into the Sea, deeming that by this purposed mishap he should satisfie the revolution and vicissitude of fortune; which to deride his folly, caused the very same jewel, being found in a fishes-belly, to returne to his hands againe. And to what purpose are the manglings and dismembings of the *Corybantes*, of the *Mænades*, and now a dayes of the Mahumetans, who skar, and gash their faces, their stomacke and their limbes, to gratifie their prophet: seeing the offence consisteth in the will, not in the breast, nor eyes, nor in the genitories, health, shoulders, or throat? *Tantus est perturbatae mentis et sedibus suis pulsæ furor, ut sic Dii placentur, quemadmodum ne homines quidem sæviunt* (Aug. Civ. Dei. vi. c. 10). So great is the fury of a troubled minde put from the state it should be in, as the Gods must be so pacified, as even men would not be so outragious. This naturall



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

contexture doth by her use not only respect us, but also the service of God, and other mens : it is injustice to make it miscarie at our pleasure, as under what pretence soever it be to kill our selves. It seemeth to be a great cowardise and manifest treason, to abuse the stupide and corrupt the servile functions of the body, to spare the diligence unto the soule how to direct them according unto reason. *Ubi iratos Deos timent, qui sic propitios habere merentur. In regie libidinis voluptatem castrati sunt quidam ; sed nemo sibi, ne vir esset, jubente Domino, manus intulit (Ibid. e Senec.).* Where are they afeard of God's anger, who in such sort deserve to have his favour ; some have beene guilded for Princes lustfull pleasure : but no man at the Lords command, hath laid hands on himselfe, to be lesse than a man. Thus did they replenish their religion and stuffe it with divers bad effects.

—*sæpius olim*

*Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.*

—Lucr. i. 82.

Religion hath oft times in former times  
Bred execrable facts, ungodly crimes.

Now can nothing of ours, in what manner soever, be either compared or referred unto divine nature, that doth not blemish or defile the same with as much imperfection. How can this infinit beauty, power and goodnes admit any correspondencie or similitude with a thing so base and abject as we are, without extreme interest and manifest derogation from his divine greatnesse? *Infirmum Dei fortius est hominibus ; et stultum Dei sapientius est hominibus (1 Cor. i. 25).* The weaknesse of God is stronger than men : and the foolishnesse of God is wiser than men. Stilpo the Philosopher, being demanded, whether the Gods rejoyce at our honours



## THE SECOND BOOKE

and sacrifices; you are indiscreet (saith he) let us withdraw our selves apart, if you speake of such matters. Notwithstanding we prescribe him limits, we lay continuall siege unto his power by our reasons. (I call our dreames and our vanities reason, with the dispensation of Philosophy, which saith, that both the foole and the wicked doe rave and dote by reason; but that it is a reason of severall and particular forme) we will subject him to the vaine and weake apparences of our understanding: him who hath made both us and our knowledge. Because nothing is made of nothing: God was not able to frame the world without matter. What? hath God delivered into our hands the keyes, and the strongest wards of his infinit puissance? Hath he obliged himselfe not to exceed the bounds of our knowledge? Suppose, oh man, that herein thou hast beene able to marke some signes of his effects: Thinkest thou, he hath therein employed all he was able to doe, and that he hath placed all his formes and *Ideas*, in this peece of worke? Thou seest but the order and policie of this little little Cell wherein thou art placed: The question is, whether thou seest it: His divinity hath an infinit jurisdiction far beyond that: This peece is nothing in respect of the whole.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*omnia cum caelo terraque marique,  
Nil sunt ad summam summam totius omnem.*

—*Lucr. vi. 675.*

All things that are, with heav'n, with Sea, and land,  
To th' whole summe of th' whole summe, as nothing stand.

This law thou aleagest is but a municipall law, and thou knowest not what the universall is: Tie thy selfe unto that, whereto thou are subject, but tie not him; he is neither thy companion, nor thy brother, nor thy fellow Citizen, nor thy copesmate. If he in any sort have communicated himselfe unto thee,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

it is not to debase himselfe, or stoope to thy smallnesse, nor to give thee the controulment of his power. Mans body cannot soare up unto the clouds, this is for thee. The Sunne uncessantly goeth his ordinary course: The bounds of the Sea and of the earth cannot be confounded: The water is ever fleeting, wavering, and without firmenesse. A wall without breach or flaw, impenetrable unto a solid body: Man cannot preserve his life amidst the flames, he cannot corporally be both in heaven and on earth, and in a thousand places together and at once. It is for thee that he hath made these rules; it is thou they take hold off. He hath testified unto Christians, that when ever it pleased him he hath out gone them all. And in truth, omnipotent as he is, wherefore should he have restrained his forces unto a limited measure? In favour of whom should he have renounced his privilege? Thy reason hath in no one other thing more likely-hood and foundation, than in that which perswadeth thee a plurality of worlds.

*Terramque et solem, lunam, mare, cætera quæ sunt,  
Non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerati.*  
—*Ib.* ii. 1094.

The earth, the Sunne, the Moone, the sea and all  
In number numberlesse, not one they call.

The famousest wits of former ages have beleev'd it, yea and some of our moderne, as forced thereunto by the apparence of humane reason. For as much as whatsoever we see in this vast worlds frame, there is no one thing alone, single and one:

—*cum in summa res nulla sit una,  
Unica quæ gignatur, et unica solaque crescat*:—*Ib.* 1086.

Whereas in generall summe, nothing is one,  
To be bred only one, grow only one.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

and that all severall kindes are multiplied in some member: Whereby it seemeth unlikely, that God hath framed this peece of worke alone without allowance; and that the matter of this forme hath wholly beene spent in this only *Individuum*;

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Quare etiam atque etiam tales fateare necesse est,  
Esse alios alibi congressus materiai,  
Qualis hic est avido complexu quem tenet Æther.*—*Ib.* 1073.

Wherefore you must confesse, againe againe,  
Of matter such like meetings elsewhere raigne  
As this, these skies in greedy gripe containe.

Namely, if it be a breathing creature, as it's motions make it so likely, that *Plato* assureth it, and divers of ours either affirme it, or dare not impugne it; no more than this old opinion, that the Heaven, the Starres, and other members of the World, are creatures composed both of body and soule; mortall in respect of their composition, but immortall by the Creators decree. Now, if there be divers worlds, as *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, and well neere all Philosophy hath thought; what know wee, whether the principles and the rules of this one concerne or touch likewise the others? Haply they have another semblance and another policie. *Epicurus* imagineth them either like or unlike. We see an infinite difference and varietie in this world, only by the distance of places. There is neither Corne, nor Wine; no nor any of our beasts seene in that new Corner of the World, which our fathers have lately discovered: All things differ from ours. And in the old time, marke but in how many parts of the world, they had never knowledge nor of *Bacchus* nor of *Ceres*. If any credit may be given unto *Plinie* or to *Herodotus*, there is in some places kinde of men that have very little or no resemblance at all with ours. And there be mungrell and ambigious shapes, betweene a humane and brutish Nature.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Some Countries there are, where men are borne headlesse, with eyes and mouthes in their breasts; where all are Hermaphrodites; where they creep on all foure; Where they have but one eye in their forehead, and heads more like unto a dog than ours: Where from the Navill downewards they are halfe fish, and live in the water; Where women are brought a bed at five yeares of age, and live but eight; Where their heads and the skin of their browes are so hard, that no yron can pierce them, but will rather turne edge; Where men never have beards. Other Nations there are, that never have use of fire; Others, whose sperme is of a blacke colour. What shall we speake of them, who naturally change themselves into Woolves, into Coultz, and then into Men againe? And if it bee (as *Plutarch* saith) that in some part of the Indiaes, there are men without mouthes, and who live only by the smell of certaine sweet odours; how many of our descriptions be then false? Hee is no more risible; nor perhaps capable of reason and societie: The direction and cause of our inward frame, should for the most part be to no purpose. Moreover, how many things are there in our knowledge, that oppugne these goodly rules, which we have allotted and prescribed unto Nature? And we undertake to joyne God himselfe unto her. How many things doe we name miraculous and against Nature? Each man and every Nation doth it according to the measure of his ignorance. How many hidden proprieties and quintessences doe we daily discover? For us to goe according to Nature, is but to follow according to our understanding, as far as it can follow, and asmuch as we can perceive in it. Whatsoever is beyond it, is monstrous and disordred. By this accompt all shall then be monstrous, to the wisest and most sufficient; for even to such, humane reason hath

## THE SECOND BOOKE

perswaded, that she had neither ground nor footing, no not so much as to warrant snow to be white: And *Anaxagoras* said, it was blacke; Whether there be any thing or nothing; Whether there be knowledge or ignorance; Which *Metrodorus Chius* denied, that any man might say. Or whether we live, as *Euripides* seemeth to doubt, and call in question, whether the life we live be a life or no, or whether that which we call death be a life:

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ ζῆν τοῦθ' ὁ κέκληται θανεῖν,  
Τὸ ζῆν δὲ θνήσκειν ἔστι;—*PLAT. Gorg. ex Eurip.*

Who knowes if thus to live, be called death,  
And if it be to dye, thus to draw breath?

And not without apparence. For, wherefore doe we from that instant take a title of being, which is but a twinc kling in the infinit course of an eternall night, and so short an interruption of our perpetuall and naturall condition? Death possessing what ever is before and behind this moment, and also a good part of this moment. Some others affirme, there is no motion, and that nothing stirreth; namely, those which follow *Melissus*. For if there be but one, neither can this sphericall motion serve him, nor the moving from one place to another, as *Plato* proveth, that there is neither generation nor corruption in nature. *Protagoras* saith, there is nothing in Nature, but doubt: That a man may equally dispute of all things: and of that also, whether all things may equally be disputed of: *Mansiphanes* said, that of things which seeme to be, no one thing, is no more, than it is not. That nothing is certaine, but uncertainty. *Parmenides*, that of that which seemeth, there is no one thing in Generall. That there is but one *Zeno*, that one selfe same is not: And that there is nothing. If one were, he should either be in another, or in him-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

selfe: if he be in another, then are they two: If he be in himselfe, they are also two, the comprizing and the comprized. According to these rules or doctrines, the Nature of things is but a false or vaine shadow. I have ever thought, this manner of speech in a Christian, is full of indiscretion and irreverence; God cannot dye, God cannot gaine-say himselfe, God cannot doe this or that. I cannot allow a man should so bound Gods heavenly power under the Lawes of our word. And that apparence, which in these propositions offers it selfe unto us, ought to be represented more reverently and more religiously. Our speech hath his infirmities and defects, as all things else have. Most of the occasions of this worlds troubles are Grammaticall. Our suits and processes proceed but from the canvassing and debating the interpretation of the Lawes, and most of our warres, from the want of knowledge in State-counsellors, that could not cleerely distinguish and fully expresse the Covenants, and Conditions of accords betweene Prince and Prince. How many weighty strifes, and important quarels, hath the doubt of this one sillable, *hoc*, brought forth in the world? examine the plainest sentence that Logike it selfe can present unto us. If you say, it is faire weather, and in so saying, say true; it is faire weather then. Is not this a certaine forme of speech? Yet will it deceive us: That it is so; Let us follow the example: If you say, I lye, and that you should say true, you lye then. The Art, the reason, the force of the conclusion of this last, are like unto the other; notwithstanding we are entangled. I see the Pyrhonian Phylosophers, who can by no manner of speech expresse their Generall conceit: for, they had need of a new language. Ours is altogether composed of affirmative propositions, which are directly against them. So that, when they say I doubt, you have them fast by the



## THE SECOND BOOKE

throat to make them avow, that at least you are assured and know, that they doubt. So have they beene compelled to save themselves by this comparison of Physicke, without which their conceit would be inexplicable and intricate. When they pronounce, I know not, or I doubt, they say, that this proposition transportes it selfe together with the rest, even as the Rewbarbe doeth, which scowred ill humours away, and therewith is carried away himselfe. This conceit is more certainly conceived by an interrogation: What can I tell? As I beare it in an Imprese of a paire of ballances. Note how some prevaile with this kind of unreverent and unhallowed speech. In the disputations that are now-adayes in our religion, if you overmuch urge the adversaries, they will roundly tell you, that it lieth not in the power of God to make his body at once to be in Paradise, and on earth, and in many other places together. And how that ancient skoffer made profitable use of it. At least (saith he) it is no small comfort unto man, to see that God cannot doe all things; for he cannot kill himselfe if he would, which is the greatest benefit we have in our condition; he cannot make mortall men immortall, nor raise the dead to life againe, nor make him that hath lived, never to have lived, and him, who hath had honours, not to have had them, having no other right over what is past, but of forgetfulnesse. And that this society betweene God and Man, may also be combined with some pleasant examples, he cannot make twice ten not to be twenty. See what he saith, and which a Christian ought to abhor, that ever such and so profane words should passe his mouth: Whereas on the contrary part, it seemeth that fond men endeavour to finde out this foolish-boldnesse of speech, that so they may turne and winde God almighty according to their measure.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*cras vel atra*  
*Nube polum pater occupato,*  
*Vel sole puro, non tamen irritum*  
*Quodcumque retro est efficiet, neque*  
*Diffinget injectumque reddet*  
*Quod jugiens semel hora cecidit.*

—HOR. CAR. iii. OD. XXIX. 43.

To morrow let our father fill the skie,  
With darke cloud, or with cleare Sunne, he thereby  
Shall not 'make voyd what once is overpast :  
Nor shall he undoe, or in new mold cast,  
What time hath once caught ; that flies hence so fast.

When we say, that the infinitie of ages, as well past as to come, is but one instant with God ; that his wisdom, goodnesse and power, are one selfsame thing with his essence ; our tongue speaks it, but our understanding can no whit apprehend it. Yet will our selfe overweening sift his divinitie through our searce : whence are engendred all the vanities and errours wherewith the world is so full-fraught, reducing and weighing with his uncertaine balance, a thing so farre from his reach, and so distant from his weight. *Mirum quo procedat improbitas cordis humani, parvulo aliquo invitata successu* (PLIN. Nat. Hist. ii. c. 23). *It is a wonder, whither the perverse wickednesse of mans heart will proceed, if it be but called-on with any little successe.* How insolently doe the Stoikes charge *Epicurus*, because he holds, that to be perfectly good and absolutely happy, belongs but only unto God ; and that the wiseman hath but a shadow and similitude thereof ? How rashly have they joyned God unto destiny ? (Which at my request, let none that beareth the surname of a Christian, doe at this day) And *Thales*, *Plato*, and *Pythagoras* have subjected him unto necessitie. This over-boldnesse, or rather bold-fiercenesse, to seeke to discover God, by and with our eyes, hath beene the cause, that a notable man of our times hath attri-

## THE SECOND BOOKE

buted a corporall forme unto divinitie, and is the cause of that which daily hapneth unto us, which is, by a particular assignation, to impute all important events to God: which because they touch us, it seemeth they also touch him, and that he regardeth them with more care and attention, than those that are but slight and ordinary unto us. *Magna dii curant, parva negligunt* (Cic. Nat. Deor. ii.). *The Gods take some care for great things, but none for little.* Note his example; he will enlighten you with his reason. *Nec in regnis quidem reges omnia minima curant* (Cic. Ib. iii.). *Nor doe Kings in their Kingdomes much care for the least matters.* As if it were all one to that King, either to remove an Empire, or a leafe of a tree: and if his providence were otherwise exercised, inclining or regarding no more the successe of a battell, than the skip of a flea. The hand of his government affords it selfe to all things after a like tenure, fashion and order; our interest addeth nothing unto it: our motions and our measures concerne him nothing and move him no whit. *Deus ita artifex magnus in magnis, ut minor non sit in parvis.* *God is so great a workeman in great things, as he is no lesse in small things.* Our arrogancie, setteth ever before us this blasphemous equality; because our occupations charge us. [Strato] hath presented the Gods with all immunitie of offices, as are their Priests. He maketh nature to produce and preserve all things, and by her weights and motions to compact all parts of the world, discharging humane nature from the feare of divine judgements. *Quod beatum æternumque sit, id nec habere, negotiū quicquam, nec exhibere alteri* (Cic. Ib. i.). *That which is blessed and eternall, nor is troubled it selfe, nor troubleth others.* Nature willeth that in all things alike, there be also like relation. Then the infinite number of mortall men, concludeth a like number of immortall: The

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

infinite things that kill and destroy, presuppose as many that preserve and profit. As the soules of the Gods, sanse tongues, sanse eyes, and sanse eares, have each one in themselves a feeling of that which the other feel, and judge of our thoughts; so mens soules, when they are free and severed from the body, either by sleepe or any distraction; divine, prognosticate and see things, which being conjoynd to their bodies, they could not see. Men (saith Saint *Paul*) when they professed themselves to bee wise, they became fooles, for they turned the glory of the incorruptible God to the similitude of the image of a corruptible man (*Rom. i. 22, 23*). Marke I pray you a little the jugling of ancient Deifications. After the great, solemne and prowde pompe of funerals, when the fire began to burne the top of the Piramide: and to take hold of the bed or hearce wherein the dead corps lay, even at that instant, they let fly an Eagle, which taking her flight aloft upward, signified that the soule went directly to Paradise. We have yet a thousand medailes and monuments, namely, of that honest woman *Faustina*, wherein that Eagle is represented, carrying a cocke-horse up towards heaven those Deified soules. It is pity we should so deceive our selves with our owne foolish devises and apish inventions,

*Quod finxere timent.*—LUCAN, i. 484.

Of that they stand in feare,  
Which they in fancie beare.

as children will be afeard of their fellowes visage, which themselves have besmeared and blackt. *Quasi quicquam infælicius sit homine, cui sua figmenta dominantur.* As though any thing were more wretched than man over whom his owne imaginations beare sway and domineere. To honour him whom we have made, is farre from honouring him that hath made

## THE SECOND BOOKE

us. *Augustus* had as many Temples as *Jupiter*, and served with as much religion and opinion of miracles. The Thracians, in requitall of the benefits they had received of *Agesilaus*, came to tell him how they had canonized him. Hath your Nation (said he) the power to make those whom it pleaseth, Gods: Then first (for example sake) make one of your selves, and when I shall have seene what good he shall have thereby, I will then thanke you for your offer. Oh sencelesse man, who cannot possibly make a worme, and yet will make Gods by dozens. Listen to *Trismegistus* when he praiseth our sufficiencie: For man to finde out divine nature, and to make it, hath surmounted the admiration of all admirable things. Loe here arguments out of Philosophies schooles it selfe.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Nosse cui Divos et cæli numina soli,  
Aut soli nescire datum.*—LUCAN, l. 452.

Only to whom heav'ns Deities to know,  
Only to whom is giv'n, them not to know.

If God be, he is a living creature; if he be a living creature, he hath sense; and if hee have sense, he is subject to corruption. If he be without a body, he is without a soule, and consequently without action; and if he have a body, he is corruptible. Is not this brave? we are incapable to have made the world, then is there some more excellent nature, that hath set her helping hand unto it. Were it not a sottish arrogancie, that wee should thinke our selves to be the perfectest thing of this Universe? Then sure there is some better thing, And that is God. When you see a rich and stately Mansion house, although you know not who is owner of it, yet will you not say, that it was built for Rats. And this more than humane frame, and divine composition, which we see, of heavens pallace, must we not deeme it to be



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

the mansion of some Lord, greater than our selves? Is not the highest ever the most worthy? And we are seated in the lowest place. *Nothing that is without a soule and void of reason, is able to bring forth a living soule capable of reason. The world doth bring us forth, then the world hath both soule and reason. Each part of us, is lesse than our selves, we are part of the world, then the world is stored with wisdom and with reason, and that more plenteously, than we are.* It is a goodly thing to have a great government. Then the worlds government belongeth to some blessed and happy nature. The Starres annoy us not, then the Starres are full of goodnesse. We have need of nourishment, then so have the Gods, and feed themselves with the vapours arising here below. Worldly goods, are not goods unto God. Then are not they goods unto us. To offend and to bee offended, are equall witnesses of imbecillitie; Then it is folly to feare God. God is good by his owne nature, man by his industry: which is more? Divine wisdom and mans wisdom, have no other distinction, but that the first is eternall. Now lastingesse is not an accession unto wisdom. Therefore are we fellowes. We have life, reason and libertie, we esteeme goodnesse, charitie and justice; these qualities are then in him. In conclusion the building and destroying the conditions of divinity, are forged by man according to the relation to himselfe. Oh what a patterne, and what a modell! Let us raise, and let us amplifie humane qualities as much as we please. Puffe-up thy selfe poore man, yea swell and swell againe.

—*non si te ruperis, inquit.*

—Hor. Serm. ii. Sat. iii. 324.

Swell till you breake, you shall not be,  
Equall to that great one, quoth he.

*Profecto non Deum, quem cogitare non possunt, sed*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*semetipsos pro illo cogitantes, non illum, sed seipsos, non illi, sed sibi comparant.* Of a truth, they conceiting, not God, whom they cannot conceive, but themselves instead of God, doe not compare him, but themselves, not to him, but themselves. In naturall things the effects doe but halfe referre their causes. What this? It is above natures order, it's condition is too high, too far out of reach, and overswaying to endure, that our conclusions should seize upon, or fetter the same. It is not by our meanes we reach unto it, this traine is too low. *We are no never heaven on the top of [Senis] mount, than in the bottome of the deepest Sea:* Consider of it, that you may see with your Astrolabe. They bring God even to the carnall acquaintance of women, to a prefixed number of times, and to how many generations. *Paulina*, wife unto *Saturnius*, a matron of great reputation in *Rome*, supposing to lye with the God *Scrapis*, by the maquerelage of the Priests of that Temple, found her selfe in the armes of a wanton lover of hers. *Varro* the most subtile, and wisest Latine Author, in his bookes of divinitie writeth, that *Hercules* his Sextaine, with one hand casting lots for himselfe, and with the other for *Hercules*, gaged a supper and a wench against him: if he won, at the charge of his offerings, but if he lost, at his owne cost. He lost and paid for a supper and a wench: Her name was *Laurentina*: Who by night saw that God in her armes, saying moreover unto her, that the next day, the first man she met withall, should heavenly pay her her wages. It fortun'd to be one *Taruncius*, a very rich young-man, who tooke her home with him, and in time left her absolute heire of all he had. And she, when it came to her turne, hoping to doe that God some acceptable service, left the *Romane* people heire generall of all her wealth: And therefore had she divine honours attributed unto her. As

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

### XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

if it were not sufficient for *Plato* to descend originally from the Gods; by a two-fold line, and to have *Neptune* for the common Author of his race. It was certainly beleev'd at *Athens*, that *Ariston* desiring to enjoy faire *Perictyone*, he could not, and that in his dreame he was warned by God *Apollo*, to leave her untouch't and unpolluted, untill such time as she were brought a bed. And these were the father and mother of *Plato*. How many such-like cuckoldries are there in histories, procured by the Gods against seely mortall men? And husbands most injuriously blazoned in favor of their children? In *Mahomets* religion, by the easie beleefe of that people are many *Merlins* found; That is to say fatherles children: Spirituall children, conceived and borne divinely in the wombs of virgins, and that in their language beare names, importing as much. We must note, that nothing is more deare and precious to any thing, than it's owne being (the *Lyon*, the *Eagle* and the *Dolphin*, esteeme nothing above their kinde) each thing referreth the qualities of all other things unto her owne conditions, which we may either amplifie or shorten; but that is all: for besides this principle, and out of this reference, our imagination cannot go, and guesse further: and it is impossible it should exceede that, or goe beyond it: Whence arise these ancient conclusions. Of all formes, that of man is the fairest: Then God is of this forme. No man can be happy without vertue, nor can vertue be without reason; And no reason can lodge but in a humane shape: God is then invested with a humane figure. *Ita est informatum anticipatum mentibus nostris, ut homini, quum de Deo cogitet, forma occurrat humana* (Cic. Nat. Deo. i.). The prejudice forestaled in our mindes is so framed, as the forme of man comes to mans minde, when he is thinking of God. Therefore *Xenophanes* said



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

pleasantly, that if beasts frame any Gods unto themselves, (as likely it is they doe) they surely frame them like unto themselves, and glorifie themselves as we do. For, why may not a Goose say thus? All parts of the world behold me, the earth serveth me to tread upon, the Sunne to give me light, the starres to inspire me with influence: this commoditie I have of the winds, and this benefit of the waters; there is nothing that this worlds-vault doth so favorably looke upon as me selfe; I am the favorite of nature; Is it not man that careth for me, that keepeth me, lodgeth me, and serveth me? For me it is he soweth, reapeth and grindeth: If he eat me, so doth man feede on his fellow, and so doe I on the wormes, that consume and eat him. As much might a Crane say, yea and more boldly, by reason of her flights-libertie, and the possession of this goodly and high-bownding region. *Tam blanda conciliatrix, et tam sui est lena ipsa natura* (Cic. Nat. Deo. ib.). *So flattrring a broker, and bawd (as it were) is nature to it selfe.* Now by the same consequence, the destinies are for us, the world is for us; it shineth, and thundreth for us: Both the creator and the creatures are for us: It is the marke and point whereat the universitie of things aymeth. Survey but the register, which Philosophy hath kept these two thousand yeares and more, of heavenly affaires. The Gods never acted, and never spake, but for man: She ascribeth no other consultation, nor imputeth other vacation unto them. Loe how they are up in armes against us.

—domitosque Herculeæ manu  
Telluris juvenes, unde periculum  
Fulgens contremuit domus  
Saturni veteris.—Hon. Car. ii. Od. xii. 6.

And young earth-gallants tamed by the hand  
Of Hercules, whereby the habitation  
Of old Saturnus did in perill stand,  
And, shyn'd it ne're so bright, yet fear'd invasion.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

See how they are partakers, of our troubles, that  
so they may be even with us, forsomuch as so many  
times we are partakers of theirs.

*Neptunus muros magnoque emota tridenti  
Fundamenta quatit, totamque à sedibus urbem  
Eruit: hic Juno Scævas sævissima portas  
Prima tenet.*—VIRG. *Æn.* ii. 610.

*Neptunus* with his great three-forked mace  
Shak's the weake wall, and tottering foundation,  
And from the site the Cittie doth displace,  
Fierce *Juno* first holds-ope the gates t' invasion.

The *Caunians*, for the jelousie of their owne Gods  
domination, upon their devotion-day arme themselves,  
and running up and downe, brandishing and striking  
the ayre with their glaives, and in this earnest manner  
they expell all foraine, and banish all strange Gods  
from out their territorie. Their powers are limited  
according to our necessitie. Some heale Horses,  
some cure men, some the plague, some the scald,  
some the cough, some one kinde of scab, and some  
another: *Adeo minimis etiam rebus prava religio  
inserit Deos: This corrupt religion engageth and in-  
serteth Gods even in the least matters:* Some make  
grapes to growe, and some garlike; Some have the  
charge of bawdrie and uncleannesse, and some of  
merchandise: To every kinde of trades-man a God.  
Some one hath his province and credit in the East,  
and some in the West:

—*hic illius arma*  
*Hic currus fuit*— —VIRG. *Æn.* i. 20.

His armor here  
His chariots there appeare.

*O sancte Apollo, qui umbilicum certum terrarum obtines.*  
—CIC. *Dis.* ii.

Sacred *Apollo*, who enfoldest,  
The earths set navell, and it holdest.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Pallada Cecropidae, Minoya Creta Dianam,  
Vulcanum tellus Hipsipilara colit.  
Junonem Sparte, Pelopciadesque Mycena,  
Pinigerum Fauni Mænalis ora caput :  
Mars Latio venerandus.*—OVID, *Fast.* lib. 81.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Besmeared with blood and goare.  
Th' Athenians *Pallas* ; *Minos*-Candy coast  
*Diana* ; *Lemnos* *Vulcan* honor's most ;  
*Mycene* and *Sparta*, *Juno* thinke divine ;  
The coast of *Mænalis* *Faune* crown'd with pine ;  
*Latio* doth *Mars* adore.

Some hath but one borough or family in his possession : Some lodgeth alone, and some in company, either voluntarily or necessarily.

*Junctaque sunt magno templa nepotis avo.*  
—i. 294.

To the great grand-sires shrine,  
The nephews temples doe combine.

Some there are so seely and popular (for their number amounteth to six and thirty thousand) that five or six of them must be shuffled up together to produce an eare of corne, and thereof they take their severall names. Three to a doore ; one to be the boards, one to be the hinges, and the third to the threshold. Foure to a childe, as protectors of his bandels, of his drinke, of his meat, and of his sucking. Some are certaine, others uncertaine, some doubtfull ; and some that come not yet into paradise.

*Quos, quoniam celi nondum dignamur honore,  
Quas dedimus certè terras, habitare sinamus.*  
—OVID, *Metam.* i. 194.

Whom for as yet with heav'n we have not graced,  
Let them on earth by our good grant be placed.

There are some Philosophicall, some poeticall, and some civill, some of a meane condition, betweene divine and humane nature, mediators, and spokes-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

men betweene us and God : worshipped in a kinde of second or diminutive order of adoration : infinite in titles and offices : some good, some bad ; some old and crazed, and some mortall. For *Chrysippus* thought, that in the last conflagration or burning of the world, all the Gods should have an end, except *Jupiter*. Man faineth a thousand pleasant societies betweene God and him. Nay is he not his countreiman ?

—*Jovis incunabula Creten.*—OVID, *Met.* viii. 99.

The Ile of famous *Crete*,  
For *Jove* a cradle meet.

Behold the excuse, that *Scævola* chiefe Bishop, and *Varro*, a great Divine in their dayes, give us upon the consideration of this subject. It is necessary (say they) that man be altogether ignorant of true things, and beleeeve many false. *Quum veritatem qua liberetur, inquirat : credatur ei expedire, quod fallitur.* Since they seeke the truth, whereby they may be free, let us beleeeve it is expedient for them, to be deceived. Mans eye cannot perceive things, but by the formes of his knowledge. And we remember not the downfall of miserable *Phaeton*, forsomuch as he undertooke to guide the reins of his fathers steeds, with a mortall hand. Our minde doth still relapse into the same depth, and by her owne temeritie doth dissipate and bruise it selfe. If you enquire of Philosophy, what matter the Sun is composed of ? What will it answer, but of yron and stone, or other stuffe for his use ? Demand of *Zeno*, what Nature is ? A fire (saith he) an Artist, fit to engender, and proceeding orderly. *Archimedes* master of this Science, and who in truth and certaintie assumeth unto himselfe a pre- cedencie above all others, saith, the Sunne is a God of enflamed yron. Is not this a quaint imagination, produced by the inevitable necessitie of Geometricall



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

demonstrations? Yet not so unavoidable and beneficiall, but *Socrates* hath beene of opinion, that it sufficed to know so much of it as that a man might measure out the land, he either demised or tooke to rent: and that *Polyænus*, who therein had beene a famous and principall Docter, after he had tasted the sweet fruits of the lazie, idle and delicious gardens of *Epicurus*, did not contemne them, as full of falsehood and apparent vanity. *Socrates* in *Xenophon*, upon this point of *Anaxagoras*, allowed and esteemed of antiquitie, well seene and expert above all others in heavenly and divine matters, saith, that he weakened his braines much, as all men doe, who over nicely and greedily will search out those knowledges, which hang not for their mowing, nor pertaine unto them. When he would needs have the Sunne to be a burning stone, he remembered not, that a stone doth not shine in the fire; and which is more, that it consumes therein. And when he made the Sunne and fire to be all one, he forgot, that fire doth not tan and blacke those he looketh upon; that wee fixly looke upon the fire, and that fire consumeth and killeth all plants and hearbs. According to the advice of *Socrates* and mine, *The wisest judging of heaven, is not to judge of it at all.* *Plato* in his *Timeus*, being to speak of Dæmons and spirits, saith, it is an enterprise far exceeding my skill and ability: we must beleeve what those ancient forefathers have said of them, who have said to have beene engendred by them. It is against reason not to give credit unto the children of the Gods, although their sayings be neither grounded upon necessary, nor likely reasons, since they tell us, that they speake of familiar and houshold matters. Let us see, whether we have a little more insight in the knowledge of humane and naturall things. Is it not a fond enterprise, to those unto which, by our owne confession, our learning cannot possible attaine,

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII  
—  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

to devise and forge them another body, and of our owne invention to give them a false forme? as is seene in the planetary motions, unto which because our minde cannot reach, nor imagine their naturall conduct, we lend them something of ours, that is to say, materiall, grose and corporall springs and wards:

—*lemo aureus, aurea summæ  
Curvatura rotæ, radiorum argenteus ordo.*

—OVID, *Met.* ii. 107.

The Axe-tree gold, the wheelles whole circle gold,  
The ranke of raies did all of silver hold.

you would say, we have had Coach-makers, Carpenters, and Painters, who have gone up thither, and there have placed engines with diverse motions, and ranged the wheelings, the windings, and enterlacements of the celestiall bodies diapred in colours, according to *Plato*, about the spindle of necessity.

*Mundus domus est maxima rerum,  
Quam quinque altitonæ fragmine zonæ  
Cingunt, per quam limbus pictus bis sex signis,  
Stellimicantibus, alius, in obliquo æthere, Lunæ  
Bigas acceptat.*

The world, of things the greatest habitation,  
Which five high-thundring Zones by separation  
Engird, through which a scarfe depainted faire  
With twice six signes star-shining in the aire.  
Obliquely raisde, the waine  
O' th' Moone doth entertaine.

'They are all dreames, and mad follies. Why will not nature one day be pleased to open her bosome to us, and make us perfectly see the meanes and conduct of her motions, and enable our eyes to judge of them? O good God, what abuses, and what distractions should we find in our poore understanding, and weake knowledge! I am deceived, if she hold one thing directly in it's point; and I shall part hence more ignorant of all other things, than mine



## THE SECOND BOOKE

ignorance. Have I not seene this divine saying in **CHAPTER**  
*Plato*, that Nature is nothing but an ænigmaticall **XII**  
 poesie? As a man might say, an overshadowed and  
 darke picture, enter-shining with an infinit'varietie of  
 false lights, to exercise our conjectures. *Latent ista*  
*omnia crassis occultata et circumfusa tenebris ut nulla*  
*acies humani ingenii tanta sit, quæ penetrare in cælum,*  
*terram intrare possit* (Cic. Acad. Q. iv.). All these  
 things lye hid so veiled and environed with misty dark-  
 nesse, as no edge of man is so piersant, as it can passe  
 into heaven, or dive into the earth. And truly, Philo-  
 sophy is nothing else but a sophisticated poesie:  
 whence have these ancient Authors all their authori-  
 ties, but from Poets? And the first were Poets  
 themselves, and in their Art treated the same. *Plato*  
 is but a loose Poet. All high and more than humane  
 Sciences are decked and enrobed with a Poeticall stile.  
 Even as women, when their naturall teeth faile  
 them, use some of yvorie, and in stead of a true  
 beautie, or lively colour, lay-on some artificiall hew;  
 and as they make trunk-sleeves of wyre and whale-  
 bone bodies, backes of lathes, and stiffe bumbasted  
 verdugals, and to the open-view of all men paint and  
 embellish themselves with counterfeit and borrowed  
 beauties; so doth learning (and our law hath, as some  
 say, certaine lawfull fictions, on which it groundeth  
 the truth of justice) which in lieu of currant payment  
 and presupposition, delivereth us those things, which  
 she her selfe teacheth us to be meere inventions:  
 For, these *Epicycles*, *Excentriques*, and *Concentriques*,  
 which Astrology useth to direct the state and motions  
 of her Starres, she giveth them unto us, as the best  
 she could ever invent, to fit and sute unto this  
 subject: as in all things else, Philosophy presenteth  
 unto us, not that which is, or she beleeveth, but  
 what she inventeth, as having most apparance,  
 likelihood, or comelinesse. *Plato* upon the discourse

An Apologie  
 of Raymond  
 Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

of our bodies-estate, and of that of beasts : That what we have said, is true, we would be assured of it, had we but the confirmation of some oracle, to confirme it. This only we warrant, that it is the likeliest we could say. It is not to heaven alone, that she sendeth her cordages, her engines, and her wheelles : Let us but somewhat consider, what she saith of our selves, and of our contexture. There is no more retrogradation, trepidation, augmentation, recoyling, and violence in the Starres and celestiall bodies, than they have fained and devised in this poore seely little body of man. Verily they have thence had reason to name it *Microcosmos*, or little world, so many severall parts and visages have they imployed to fashion and frame the same. To accommodate the motions which they see in man, the divers functions and faculties, that we feel in our selves ; Into how many severall parts have they divided our soule ? Into how many seats have they placed her ? Into how many orders, stages, and stations have they divided this wretched man, beside the naturall and perceptible ? and to how many distinct offices and vacation ? They make a publike imaginarie thing of it. It is a subject, which they hold and handle : they have all power granted them, to rip him, to sever him, to range him, to joyne and reunite him together againe, and to stuffe him, every one according to his fantasie, and yet they neither have nor possesse him. They cannot so order or rule him, not in truth onely, but in imagination, but still some cadence or sound is discovered, which escapeth their Architecture, bad as it is, and botcht together with a thousand false patches, and fantastickall peeces. And they have no reason to be excused : For, to Painters, when they pourtray the heaven, the earth, the seas, the hills, the scattered Ilands, we pardon them, if they but represent us with some slight apparence

## THE SECOND BOOKE

of them; and as of things unknowne we are contented with such fained shadowes; But when they draw us, or any other subject that is familiarly knowne unto us, to the life, then seeke we to draw from them a perfect and exact representation of theirs or our true lineaments, or colours; and scorne if they misse never so little. I commend the Milesian wench, who seeing *Thales* the Philosopher continually ammus- ing himselfe in the contemplation of heavens-wide- bounding vault, and ever holding his eyes aloft, laid something in his way to make him stumble, therby to warne and put him in minde, that he should not amuse his thoughts about matters above the clowds, before he had provided for, and well considered those at his feet. Verily she advised him well, and it better became him, rather to looke to himselfe than to gaze on heaven; For, as *Democritus* by the mouth of *Cicero* saith,

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Quod est ante pedes, nemo spectat: celi scrutantur  
plagas.—Cic. Div. ii.*

No man lookes, what before his feet doth lie,  
They seeke and search the climates of the skie.

But our condition beareth, that the knowledge of what we touch with our hands, and have amongst us, is as far from us and above the clouds, as that of the stars: As saith *Socrates* in *Plato*, That one may justly say to him who medleth with Philosophy, as the woman said to *Thales*, which is, he seeth nothing of that which is before him. For, every Philosopher is ignorant of what his neighbour doth, yea, he knowes not what himselfe doth, and wots not what both are, whether beasts or men. These people who thinke *Sebondes* reasons to be weake and lame, who know nothing themselves, and yet will take upon them to governe the world and know all:



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Quæ mare compescant causæ, quid temperet annum,  
Stellæ sponte sua, jussæve vagentur et errent :  
Quid præmat obscurum Lunæ, quid proferat orbem,  
Quid velit et possit rerum concordia discors.*

—HOR. i. Epist. xii. 16.

What cause doth calme the Sea, what cleares the yeare,  
Whether Stars forc't, or of selfe-will appeare :  
What makes the Moones dark Orbe to wax or wane,  
What friendly fewd of things both will and can.

Did they never sound amid their books, the difficulties that present themselves to them, to know their owne being? We see very well, that our finger stirreth, and our foot moveth, that some parts of our body, move of themselves without our leave, and other some that stir but at our pleasure: and we see that certaine apprehensions engender a blushing-red colour, others a palenesse; that some imagination doth only worke in the milt, another in the braine; some one enduceth us to laugh, another causeth us to weepe; some astonisheth and stupifieth all our senses, and staieth the motion of all our limbs: at some object the stomake riseth, and at some other the lower parts. But how a spirituall impression causeth or worketh such a dent or flaw in a massie and solid body or subject, and the nature of the conjoyning, and compacting of these admirable springs and wards, man yet never knew: *Omnia incerta ratione, et in naturæ majestate abdita* (PLIN.). All uncertaine in reason, and hid in the majesty of nature, Saith Plinie, And Saint Augustine, *Modus, quo corporibus adhærent spiritus, omnino mirus est, nec comprehendendi ab homine potest, et hoc ipse homo est* (AUG. *De Spir. et Anim.*). The meane is clearely wonderfull, whereby spirits cleave to our bodies, nor can it be comprehended by man, and that is very man. Yet is there no doubt made of him: For mens opinions are received after ancient beliefes, by authority and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

upon credit; as if it were a religion and a law. What is commonly held of it, is received as a gibbrish or fustian tongue. This trueth with all her framing of arguments, and proporcioning of proofes, is received as a firme and solid body, which is no more shaken, which is no more judged. On the other side, every one, the best he can, patcheth up and comforteth this received beliefe, with all the meanes his reason can afford him, which is an instrument very supple, pliable, and yeelding to all shapes. *Thus is the world filled with toys, and overwhelmed in lies and leasings.* The reason that men doubt not much of things, is that common impressions are never thoroughly tride and sifted, their ground is not sounded, nor where the fault and weaknes lieth: Men only debate and question of the branch, not of the tree: They aske not whether a thing be true, but whether it was understood or meant thus and thus. They enquire not whether *Galen* hath spoken any thing of worth, but whether thus, or so, or otherwise. Truly there was some reason, this bridle or restraint of our judgments liberty, and this tyranny over our beliefs should extend it selfe even to schooles and arts. The God of scholasticall learning, is *Aristotle*: It is religion to debate of his ordinances, as of those of *Lycurgus* in *Sparta*. His doctrine is to us as a canon Law, which peradventure is as false as another. I know not why I should or might not, as soone, and as easie accept, either *Platoes Ideas*, or *Epicurus* his Atomes and indivisible things, or the fulnesse and emptines of *Leucippus* and *Democritus*, or the water of *Thales*, or of *Anaximanders* infinite of nature, or the aire of *Diogenes*, or the numbers or proportion of *Pythagoras*, or the infinite of *Parmenides*, or the single-one of *Musaeus*, or the water and fire of *Apollodorus*, or the similarie and resembling parts of *Anaxagoras*, or the discord and concord of *Empedocles*, or

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

the fire of *Heraclitus*, or any other opinion (of this infinit confusion of opinions and sentences, which this goodly humane reason, by her certainty and cleare-sighted vigilancie brings forth in whatsoever it medleth withal) as I should of *Aristotles* conceit, touching this subject of the principles of naturall things; which he frameth of three parts, that is to say, *Matter*, *Forme*, and *Privation*. And what greater vanitie can there be, than to make inanitie it selfe the cause of the production of things? Privation is a negative: With what humour could he make it the cause and beginning of things that are? Yet durst no man move that but for an exercise of Logike: Wherein nothing is disputed to put it in doubt, but to defend the Author of the Schoole from strange objections: His authoritie is the marke, beyond which it is not lawfull to enquire. It is easie to frame what one list upon allowed foundations: For, according to the law and ordinance of this positive beginning, the other parts of the frame are easily directed without crack or danger. By which way we finde our reason well grounded, and we discourse without rub or let in the way: For our masters preoccupate and gaine afore-hand as much place in our beleefe, as they need to conclude afterward what they please, as Geometricians doe by their graunted questions: The consent and approbation which we lend them, giving them wherewith to draw us, either on the right or left hand, and at their pleasure to winde and turne us. Whosoever is beleaved in his pre-suppositions, he is our master, and our God: He will lay the plot of his foundations so ample and easie, that, if he list, he will carrie us up, even unto the clouds. In this practice or negotiation of learning, we have taken the saying of *Pythagoras* for currant payment; which is, that *every expert*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

man ought to be beleevd in his owne trade. The Logitian referreth himselfe to the Grammarian for the signification of words: The Rethoritian borroweth the places of arguments from the Logitian: The Poet his measures from the Musitian: The Geometrician his proportions from the Arithmetician: The Metaphisikes take the conjectures of the Physikes, for a ground. For, every art hath her presupposed principles, by which mans judgement is bridled on all parts. If you come to the shooke or front of this barre, in which consists the principall error, they immediatly pronounce this sentence; *That there is no disputing against such as deny principles.* There can be no principles in men, except divinitie hath revealed them unto them: All the rest, both beginning, middle, and end, is but a dreame and a vapor. Those that argue by presupposition, we must presuppose against them, the very same axiome, which is disputed of. For, each humane presupposition, and every invention, unlesse reason make a difference of it, hath as much authoritie as another. So must they all be equally balanced, and first the generall and those that tyrannize us. *A perswasion of certaintie is a manifest testimonie of foolishnesse, and of extreme uncertaintie.* And no people are lesse Philosophers and more foolish, than *Platoes* Philodoxes, or lovers of their owne opinions. We must know whether fire be hot, whether snow be white, whether in our knowledge there be any thing hard or soft. And touching the answeres, whereof they tell old tales, as to him who made a doubt of heat, to whom one replied, that to trie he should cast himselfe into the fire; to him that denied the yee to be cold, that he should put some in his bosome; they are most unworthy the profession of a Philosopher. If they had left us in our owne naturall estate, admitting of strange apparences, as

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER I. *They present themselves unto us by our senses, and  
II. had suffered us to follow our naturall appetites,  
As Language directed by the condition of our birth, they should  
of Reason then have reason to speake so. But from them it  
Senses is, that we have learnt to become Judges of the  
world: it is from them we hold this conceit, that  
mans reason is the generall controulour of all that  
is, both without and within heavens-vault; which  
imbraceth all, and can doe all, by meanes whereof,  
all things are knowne and discerned. This answer  
were good among the Canibals, who without any  
of *Aristotles* precepts, or so much as knowing the  
name of naturall Philosophy, enjoy most happily, a  
long, a quiet, and a peaceable life. This answer  
might haply availe more, and be of more force,  
than all those they can borrow from their reason  
and invention. All living creatures, yea, beasts  
and all, where the commandement of the naturall  
law is yet pure and simple, might with us be capable  
of this answer: but they have renounced it. They  
shall not need to tell me, it is true, for you both  
heare and see, that it is so: They must tell me, if  
what I thinke I feel, I feel the same in effect; and  
if I feel it, then let them tell me, wherefore I feel it,  
and how and what: Let them tell me the name, the  
beginning, the tennons, and the abuttings of heat  
and of cold, with the qualities of him that is agent,  
or of the patient; or let them quit me their pro-  
fession, which is neither to admit, nor approve any  
thing, but by the way of reason: It is their touch-  
stone, to trie all kindes of Essayes. But surely it is a  
touchstone full of falsehood, errors, imperfection and  
weaknesse: which way can we better make triall of  
it, than by it selfe? If she may not be credited  
speaking of her selfe, hardly can she be fit to judge  
of strange matters: If she know any thing, it can be  
but her being and domicile. She is in the soule, and*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

either a part or effect of the same. For, the true and essential reason (whose name we steal by false signes) lodgeth in Gods bosome: There is her home, and there is her retreat, thence she takes her flight, when Gods pleasure is that we shall see some glimpse of it: Even as *Pallas* issued out of her fathers head, to communicate and impart her selfe unto the world. Now let us see what mans reason hath taught us of her selfe and of the soule: Not of the soule in generall, whereof well nigh all Philosophy maketh both the celestiall and first bodies partakers; nor of that which *Thales* attributed even unto things, that are reputed without soule or life, drawne thereunto by the consideration of the Adamant stone: But of that which appertaineth to us, and which we should know best.

CHAPTER  
XII  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Ignoratur enim quæ sit natura animæ,  
Nata sit, an contris nascentibus insinuetur,  
Et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta,  
An tenebras orbi risat, vastasque lacunas,  
An pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se.*

—LUCR. l. 113.

What the soules nature is, we doe not know; .  
If it be bred, or put in those are bred,  
Whether by death divorst with us it goe,  
Or see the darke vast lakes of hell below,  
Or into other creatures turne the head.

To *Crates* and *Dicæarchus* it seemed that there was none at all; but that the body stirred thus with and by a naturall motion: To *Plato*, that it was a substance moving of it selfe: To *Thales*, a Nature without rest; To *Asclepiades*, an exercitation of the senses: To *Hesiodus* and *Anaximander*, a thing composed of earth and water: To *Parmenides*, of earth and fire: To *Empedocles*, of bloud:

*Sanguineam vomit ille animam —*

—VIRG. ÆN. ix. 349.

His soule of purple-bloud he vomits out.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

To *Possidonius*, *Cleanthes*, and *Galen*, a heat, or hot complexion :

*Ignæus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo :*

—vi. 730.

A fiery vigor and celestiall spring,  
In their originall they strangely bring.

To *Hippocrates*, a spirit dispersed thorow the body: To *Varro*, an aire received in at the mouth, heated in the lungs, tempered in the heart, and dispersed thorow all parts of the body: To *Zeno*, the quintessence of the foure Elements: To *Heraclides Ponticus*, the light: To *Xenocrates*, and to the *Egyptians*, a moving number: To the *Chaldeans*, a vertue without any determinate forme.

—*Habitu quendam vitalem corporis esse,  
Harmoniam Græci quam dicunt.*—*LUCR.* iii. 100.

There of the body is a vitall frame,  
The which the Greeks a harmony doe name.

And not forgetting *Aristotle*, that which naturally causeth the body to move, who calleth it *Entelechy*, or perfection moving of it selfe (as cold an invention as any other) for he neither speaketh of the essence, nor of the beginning, nor of the soules nature; but onely noteth the effects of it: *Lactantius*, *Seneca*, and the better part amongst the *Dogmatists*, have confessed, they never understood what it was: And after all this rable of opinions: *Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit* (*CIC. Tus. Qu. i.*). Which of these opinions is true, let some God looke unto it, (saith *Cicero*). I know by my selfe (quoth Saint *Bernard*) how God is incomprehensible, since I am not able to comprehend the parts of mine owne being: *Heraclitus*, who held that every place was full of Soules and *Dæmons*, maintained neverthesse, that a man could never goe so far towards the knowledge of the soule, as that he



## THE SECOND BOOKE

could come unto it; so deep and mysterious was her essence. There is no lesse dissention nor disputing about the place, where she should be seated. *Hypocrates* and *Herophilus* place it in the ventricle of the braine: *Democritus* and *Aristotle*, through all the body:

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Ut bona sarpe valetudo cum dicitur esse  
Corporis, et non est tamen hæc pars ulla valentis.*  
—*Lucr.* iii. 103.

As health is of the body said to be,  
Yet is no part of him, in health we see,

*Epicurus* in the stomacke.

*Hæc exultat enim pavor ac metus, hæc loca circum  
Lætitie mulcent.* — 142.

For in these places feare doth domineere,  
And neere these places joy keepes merry cheere.

The Stoickes, within and about the heart: *Erastriatus*, joyning the membrane of the *Epicranium*: *Empedocles*, in the bloud: as also *Moses*, which was the cause he forbad the eating of beasts bloud, unto which their soule is commixed: *Galen* thought that every part of the body had his soule: *Strato* hath placed it betweene the two upper eye-lids: *Qua facie quidem sit animus aut ubi habitet, nec querendum quidem est* (*Cic. Tusc. Qu. i.*). We must not so much as enquire, what face the minde beares, or where it dwels: saith *Cicero*. I am well pleased to let this man use his owne words: For, why should I alter the speech of eloquence it selfe? since there is small gaine in stealing matter from his inventions: They are both little used, not very forcible, and little unknowne. But the reason why *Chrysippus*, and those of his Sect, will prove the soule to be about the heart, is not to be forgotten. It is (saith he) because when we will affirme or sweare anything we lay our

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

hand upon the stomacke; And when we will pronounce, *εγω*, which signifieth, my selfe, we put downe our chin toward the stomacke. This passage ought not to be past-over without noting the vanity of so great a personage: For, besides that his considerations are of themselves very slight, the latter proveth but to the Græcians, that they have their soule in that place. *No humane judgement is so vigilant or Argos-eyed, but sometimes shal fall a sleep or slumber.* What shal we feare to say? Behold the Stoickes, fathers of humane wisdom, who devise that the soule of man, overwhelmed with any ruine, laboureth and panteth a long time to get out, unable to free her selfe from that charge, even as a Mouse taken in a trap. Some are of opinion, that the world was made, to give a body in lieu of punishment, unto the spirits, which through their fault were fallen from the puritie, wherein they were created: The first creation having beene incorporeall. And that according as they have more or lesse removed themselves from their spirituality, so are they more or lesse merily and Gioivially, or rudely and Saturnally incorporated: Whence proceedeth the infinite variety of so much matter created. But the spirit, who for his chastizement was invested with the body of the Sun, must of necessitie have a very rare and particular measure of alteration. The extremities of our curious search turne to a glimmering and all to a dazeling. As *Plutarke* saith, of the off-spring of Histories, that after the manner of Cards or Maps, the utmost limits of knowne Countries, are set downe to be full of thicke marrish grounds, shady forrests, desart and uncouth places. See here wherefore the grosest and most Childish dotings, are more commonly found in these which treat of highest and furthest matters; even confounding and overwhelming themselves in their owne curiositie and presumption. The end and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

beginning of learning are equally accompted foolish. Marke but how *Plato* taketh and raiseth his flight aloft in his Poeticall clouds, or cloudy Poesies. Behold and read in him the gibbrish of the Gods. But what dream'd or doted he on, when he defined man to be a creature with two feet, and without feathers; giving them that were disposed to mocke at him, a pleasant and scopefull occasion to doe it? For, having plucked-off the feathers of a live capon, they named him the man of *Plato*. And by what simplicitie did the Epicureans first imagine, that the Atomes or Motes, which they termed to be bodies, having some weight and a naturall moving downward, had framed the world; untill such time as they were advised by their adversaries, that by this description, it was not possible, they should joyne and take hold one of another; their fall being so downe-right and perpendicular, and every way engendring Parallel lines? And therefore was it necessarie, they should afterward adde a casuall moving, sideling unto them: And moreover to give their Atomes crooked and forked tailes, that so they might take hold of any thing and claspe themselves. And even then, those that pursue them with this other consideration, doe they not much trouble them? If Atomes have by chance formed so many sorts of figures, why did they never meet together to frame a house, or make a shooe? Why should we not likewise beleeeve that an infinit number of Greek Letters confusedly scattred in some open place, might one day meet and joyne together to the contexture of th' *Iliads*? That which is capable of reason (saith *Zeno*) is better than that which is not. *There is nothing better than the world: then the world is capable of reason.* By the same arguing *Cotta* maketh the world a Mathematician, and by this other arguing of *Zeno*, he makes him a Musitian, and an Organist. The whole is

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

more than the part: We are capable of wisdom, and we are part of the world: Then the world is wise. There are infinite like examples seen, not only of false, but foolish arguments, which cannot hold, and which accuse their authors not so much of ignorance, as of folly, in the reproches that Philosophers charge one another with, about the disagreements in their opinions and Sects. He that should fardle-up a bundle or huddle of the fooleries of mans wisdom, might recount wonders. I willingly assemble some (as a shew or patterne) by some meanes or byase, no lesse profitable than the most moderate instructions. Let us by that judge, what we are to esteeme of man, of his sense, and of his reason; since in these great men, and who have raised mans sufficiencie so high, there are found so grosse errors, and so apparant defects. As for me, I would rather beleieve, that they have thus casually treated learning, even as a sporting childes baby, and have sported themselves with reason, as of a vaine and frivolous instrument, setting forth all sorts of inventions, devices, and fantasies, sometimes more outstretched, and sometimes more loose. The same *Plato*, who defineth man like unto a Capon, saith elsewhere after *Socrates*, that in good sooth, he knoweth not what man is; and that of all parts of the world, there is none so hard to be knowne. By this varietie of conceits and instabilitie of opinions, they (as it were) leade us closely by the hand to this resolution of their irresolution. They make a profession not alwayes to present their advice manifest and unmasked: they have oft concealed the same under the fabulous shadows of Poesie, and sometimes under other vizards. For, our imperfection admitteth this also, that raw meats are not alwayes good for our stomachs: but they must be dried, altered and corrupted, and so doe they, who sometimes shadow

## THE SECOND BOOKE

their simple opinions and judgements; And that they may the better sute themselves unto common use, they many times falsifie them. They will not make open profession of ignorance, and of the imbecillitie of mans reason, because they will not make children afraid: But they manifestly declare the same unto us under the shew of a troubled Science and unconstant learning. I perswade some body in *Italy*, who laboured very much to speake Italian, that alwayes provided, he desired but to be understood, and not to seek to excell others therein, he should onely imploy and use such words as came first to his mouth, whether they were Latine, French, Spanish, or Gascoine, and that adding the Italian terminations unto them, he should never misse to fall upon some idiome of the Countrie, either Tuscan, Roman, Venetian, Piemontoise, or Neapolitan; and amongst so many severall formes of speech to take hold of one. The very same I say of Philosophy. She hath so many faces, and so much varietie, and hath said so much, that all our dreames and devises are found in her. The fantasie of man can conceive or imagine nothing, be it good or evill, that is not to be found in her: *Nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo Philosophorum* (Cic. Div. ii.). *Nothing may be spoken so absurdly, but that it is spoken by some of the Philosophers.* And therefore doe I suffer my humours or caprices more freely to passe in publike; Forasmuch as though they are borne with, and of me, and without any patterne; well I wot, they will be found to have relation to some ancient humour, and some shall be found, that will both know and tell whence, and of whom I have borrowed them. My customes are naturall; when I contrived them, I called not for the help of any discipline: And weake and faint as they were, when I have had a desire to

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

expresse them, and to make them appeare to the world a little more comely and decent, I have somewhat indevoured to aide them with discourse, and assist them with examples. I have wondred at my selfe, that by meere chance I have met with them, agreeing and sutable to so many ancient examples and Philosophicall discourses. What regiment my life was of, I never knew nor learned but after it was much worne and spent. A new figure: An unpremeditated Philosopher and a casuall. But to returne unto our soule, where *Plato* hath seated reason in the braine; anger in the heart; lust in the liver; it is very likely, that it was rather an interpretation of the soules motions, than any division or separation he meant to make of it, as of a body into many members. And the likeliest of their opinion is, that it is alwayes a soule, which by her rationall faculty, remembreth her selfe, comprehendeth, judgeth, desireth, and exerciseth all her other functions, by divers instruments of the body, as the Pilote ruleth and directeth his ship according to the experience he hath of it; now stretching, haling, or loosing a cable, sometimes hoysing the Mainyard, removing an Oare, or stirring the Rudder, causing severall effects with one only power: And that she abideth in the braine, appeareth by this, that the hurts and accidents, which touch that part, doe presently offend the faculties of the soule, whence she may without inconvenience descend and glide through other parts of the body:

—medium non deserit unquam

*Cæli Phœbus iter; radiis tamen omnia lustrat.*

—CLAUD. vi. *Hon. Cons. Pan.* 411.

Never the Sunne forsakes heav'ns middle wayes,  
Yet with his rayes he light's all, all survayes.

as the Sunne spreadeth his light, and infuseth his power from heaven, and therewith filleth the whole world.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Cætera pars animæ per totum dissita corpus  
Paret, et ad numen mentis nomenque mouetur.*

—LUCR. iii. 144.

Th' other part of the soule through all the body sent  
Obeyes, and moved is, by the mindes government.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Some have said, that there was a generall soule,  
like unto a great body, from which all particular  
soules were extracted, and returned thither, alwayes  
reconjoyning and entermingling themselves unto that  
Universall matter:

—*Deum namque ire per omnes*

*Terrasque tractusque maris cælumque profundum:  
Hinc pecudes; armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,  
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vilas,  
Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri  
Omnia: nec morti esse locum—*

—VIRG. Georg. iv. Ge. 222.

For God through all the earth to passe is found,  
Through all Sea currents, through the heav'n profound,  
Here hence men, beards, and all wilde beasts that are,  
Short life in birth each to themselves doe share.  
All things resolved to this point restor'd  
Returne, nor any place to death afford.

others, that they did but reconjoyne and fasten them-  
selves to it againe: others, that they were produced  
by the divine substance: others, by the Angels, of  
fire and aire: some from the beginning of the world;  
and some, even at the time of need: others, make  
them to descend from the round of the Moone, and  
that they returne to it againe. The common sort  
of antiquitie, that they are begotten from Father to  
Sonne, after the same manner and production, that  
all other naturall things are; arguing so by the  
resemblances, which are betweene Fathers and  
Children.

*Instillata patris virtus tibi,—*

Thy Fathers vertues be  
Instilled into thee.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis,*  
—HOR. Car. iv. Od. iv. 29.

Of valiant Sires and good,  
There comes a valiant brood.

and that from fathers we see descend unto children, not only the marks of their bodies, but also a resemblance of humours, of complexions, and inclinations of the soule.

*Denique cur acrum violentia triste Leonum  
Seminum sequitur, dolus Vulpibus, et fuga Cervis  
A patribus datur, et patrius pavor incitat Artus  
Si non certa suo quia semine seminioque  
Vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore toto?*  
—LUCR. iii. 766, 771.

Why followes violence the savage Lyons race?  
Why craft the Foxes? Why to Deere to flye apace?  
By parents is it given, when parents feare incites,  
Unlesse because a certaine force of inward spirits  
With all the body growes,  
As seed and seed-spring goes?

That divine justice is grounded thereupon, punishing the fathers offences upon the children; forsomuch as the contagion of the fathers vices, is in some sort printed, in childrens soules, and that the misgovernment of their will toucheth them. Moreover, that if the soules came from any other place, then by a naturall consequence, and that out of the body they should have beene some other thing, they should have some remembrance of their first being: Considering the naturall faculties, which are proper unto him, to discourse, to reason, and to remember.

—*si in corpus nascentibus insinuat,*  
*Cur super anteactam ætatem meminisse nequimus,*  
*Nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?*  
—LUCR. iii. 692.

If our soule at our birth be in our body cast,  
Why can we not remember ages over-past,  
Nor any markes retaine of things done first or last?



## THE SECOND BOOKE

For, to make our soules-condition, to be of that worth we would, they must all be pre-supposed wise, even when they are in their naturall simplicitie and genuine puritie. So should they have beene such, being freed from the corporall prison, aswell before they entred the same, as we hope they shall be, when they shall be out of it. And it were necessarie they should (being yet in the body) remember the said knowledge (as *Plato* said) that what we learn't, was but a new remembring of that which we had knowne before: A thing that any man may by experience maintaine to be false and erroneous. First, because we doe not precisely remember what we are taught, and that if memorie did meereley execute her function, she would at least suggest us with something besides our learning. Secondly, what she knew being in her puritie, was a true understanding, knowing things as they are, by her divine intelligence: Whereas here, if she be instructed, she is made to receive lies and apprehend vice, wherein she cannot imploy her memorie; this image and conception, having never had place in her. To say, that the corporall prison, doth so suppress her naturall faculties, that they are altogether extinct in her: first, is cleane contrarie to this other beleefe, to [acknowledge] her forces so great, and the operations which men in this transitorie life feel of it, so wonderfull, as to have thereby concluded this divinitie, and forepast eternitie, and the immortalitie to come:

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Nam si tantopere est animi mutata potestas,  
Omnis ut actarum exciderit retinenda rerum,  
Non ut opinor ea ab letho jam longior errat.*

—695.

If of our minde the power be so much altered,  
As of things done all hold, all memorie is fled,  
Then (as I ghesse) it is not far from being dead.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Moreover, it is here with us, and no where else, that the soules powers and effects, are to be considered; all the rest of her perfections, are vaine and unprofitable unto her: it is by her present condition, that all her immortalitie must be rewarded and paid, and she is only accomptable for the life of man: It were injustice to have abridged her of her meanes and faculties, and to have disarmed her against the time of her captivitie and prison, of her weaknesse and sicknesse, of the time and season where she had beene forced and compelled to draw the judgement and condemnation of infinite and endlesse continuance, and to relye upon the consideration of so short a time, which is peradventure of one or two houres, or if the worst happen, of an age, (which have no more proportion with [infinite], than a moment) definitively to appoint and establish of all her being, by that instant of space. It were an impious disproportion to wrest an eternall reward in consequence of so short a life. *Plato*, to save himselfe from this inconvenience, would have future payments limited to a hundred yeares continuance, relatively unto a humane continuance: and many of ours have given them temporall limits. By this they judged, that her generation followed the common condition of humane things: As also her life, by the opinion of *Epicurus* and *Democritus*, which hath most beene received, following these goodly apparences. That her birth was seene, when the body was capable of her; her vertue and strength was perceived as the corporall encreased; in her infancie might her weaknesse be discerned, and in time her vigor and ripenesse, then her decay and age, and in the end her decrepitude:

—*gigni pariter cum corpore, et una  
Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem.*—*Ib.* 450.

The minde is with the body bred, we doe behold,  
It jointly growes with it, with it it waxeth old.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

They perceived her to be capable of diverse passions, and agitated by many languishing and painfull motions, where through she fell into wearinesse and griefe, capable of alteration and change, of joy, stupefaction and languishment, subject to her infirmities, diseases, and offences, even as the stomacke or the foot.

CHAPTER  
XII  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Seboad

*--mentem sanari, corpus ut argrum  
Cernimus, et flecti medicina posse videmus;*

—*Ib.* 517.

We see as bodiles sicke are cur'd, so is the minde,  
We see, how Physicke can it each way turne and winde.

dazled and troubled by the force of wine; removed from her seat by the vapors of a burning feaver; drowzie and sleepy by the application of some medicaments, and rouzed up againe by the vertue of some others.

*--corpoream naturam animi esse necesse est,  
Corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat.*—*Ib.* 176.

The nature of the minde must needs corporeall bee,  
For with corporeall darts and strokes it's griev'd we see.

She was scene to dismay and confound all her faculties by the only biting of a sicke dog, and to containe no great constancie of discourse, no sufficiency, no vertue, no philosophicall resolution, no contention of her forces, that might exempt her from the subjection of these accidents: The spittle or slavering of a massive dog shed upon *Socrates* his hands, to trouble all his wisdom, to distemper his great and regular imaginations, and so to vanquish and annull them, that no signe or shew of his former knowledge was left in him:

*--vis animai  
Conturbatur, et divisa seorsum  
Disiectatur eodem illo destructa veneno.*—*Ib.* 501.

The soules force is disturbed, seperated,  
Distraught by that same poison, alienated.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

And the said venome to finde no more resistance in his soule, than in that of a childe of foure yeares old, a venome able to make all Philosophy (were she incarnate) become furious and mad: So that *Cato*, who scorned both death and fortune, could not abide the sight of a looking glasse, or of water; overcome with horreur, and quelled with amazement, if by the contagion of a mad dog, he had falne into that sicknesse, which Physitians call *Hydrophobia*, or feare of waters.

—*vis morbi distracta per artus*

*Turbat agens animam, spumantes æquore salso*

*Ventorum ut validis fervere viribus undæ.*—*Ib.* 495.

The force of the disease disperst through joints offends,

Driving the soule, as in salt Seas the wave ascends,

Foming by furious force which the wind raging lends.

Now concerning this point, Philosophy hath indeed armed man for the enduring of all other accidents, whether of patience, or if it be overcostly to be found, of an infallible defeat, in conveying her selfe, altogether from the sense: but they are meanes, which serve a soule, that is her owne, and in her proper force, capable of discourse and deliberation: not to this inconvenience, wherewith a Philosopher, a soule becommeth the soule of a foole troubled, vanquished and lost, which divers occasions may produce, as in an over-violent agitation, which by some vehement passion, the soule may beget in her selfe: or a hurt in some part of the body; or an exhalation from the stomacke, casting us into some astonishment, dazling, or giddinesse of the head:

—*morbis in corporis avius errat*

*Sæpe animus, dementit enim, deliraque fatur,*

*Interdumque gravi Lethargo fertur in altum*

*Æternumque soporem, oculis nutuque cadenti.*

—*Ib.* 467.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

The minde in bodies sicknesse often wandring strays:  
For it enraged rave's, and idle talke outbraves:  
Brought by sharpe Lethargy sometime to more than deepe,  
While eyes and eye-lids fall into eternall sleepe.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Philosophers have in mine opinion but slightly harp't upon this string, no more than another of like consequence. They have ever this *Dilemma* in their mouth, to comfort our mortall condition. *The soule is either mortall or immortall: if mortall, she shall be without paine: if immortall, she shall mend.* They never touch the other branch: What, if she em-paire and be worse? And leave the menaces of future paines to Poets. But thereby they deal themselves a good game. They are two omissions, which in their discourses doe often offer themselves unto me. I come to the first againe: the soule loseth the use of that Stoicall chiefe felicitie, so constant and so firme. Our goodly wisdom must necessarily in this place yeeld her selfe, and quit her weapons. As for other matters, they also considered by the vanitie of mans reason, that the mixture and societie of two so different parts, as is the mortall and the immortall is inimaginable:

*Quippe etenim mortale aeterno jungere, et una  
Consentire putare, et fungi mutua posse,  
Desipere est. Quid enim diversius esse putandum est,  
Aut magis inter se disjunctum discrepitanque,  
Quam mortale quod est, immortalis atque perenni  
Junctum in concilio arvas tolerare procellas?*

—*Ib.* 831.

For what immortall is, mortall to joyne unto,  
And thinke they can agree, and mutuall duties doe,  
Is to be foolish: For what thinke we stranger is,  
More disagreeable, or more disjoyn'd, than this,  
That mortall with immortall endlesse join'd in union,  
Can most outrageous stormes endure in their communion?

Moreover they felt their soule to be engaged in death, as well as the body;

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*simul ævo fessa fatiscit*,—*Ib.* 463.

It joyntly faint's in one,  
Wearied as age is gone.

Which thing (according to *Zeno*) the image of sleep doth manifestly shew unto us. For he esteemeth, that it is a fainting and declination of the soule, aswell as of the body. *Contrahi animum, et quasi labi putat atque decidere* (*Cic. Div. ii.*). *He thinks the minde is contracted, and doth as it were slide and fall downe.* And that (which is perceived in some) it's force and vigor maintaineth it selfe even in the end of life, they referred and imputed the same to the diversitie of diseases, as men are seene in that extremitie, to maintaine, some one sense, and some another, some their hearing, and some their smelling, without any alteration; and there is no weaknesse or decay seene so universall, but some entire and vigorous parts will remaine.

*Non alio pacto quam si pes cum dolet ægri,  
In nullo caput interea sit fortè dolore.*—*Lucr.* iii, 111.

No otherwise, than if, when sick-mans foote doth ake,  
Meane time perhaps his head no fellow-feeling take.

Our judgements sight referreth it selfe unto truth, as doth the Owles eyes unto the shining of the Sunne, as saith *Aristotle*. How should we better convince him, than by so grosse blindnesse, in so apparent a light? For, the contrarie opinion of the soules immortalitie, which *Cicero* saith, to have first beene brought in (at least by the testimonie of books) by *Pherecydes Syrius*, in the time of King *Tullus* (others ascribe the invention thereof to *Thales*, and other to others) it is the part of humane knowledge treated most sparingly and with more doubt. The most constant Dogmatists (namely in this point) are inforced to cast themselves under the shelter of the



## THE SECOND BOOKE

Academikes wings. No man knowes what *Aristotle* hath established upon this subject, no more than all the ancients in Generall, who handle the same with a very wavering beliefe: *Rem gratissimam promittentium magis quam probantium.* Who rather promise than approve a thing most acceptable. He hath hidden himselfe under the clouds of intricat and ambiguous words, and unintelligible senses, and hath left his Sectaries as much cause to dispute upon his judgement, as upon the matter. Two things made this his opinion plausible to them: the one, that without the immortality of soules, there should no meanes be left to ground or settle the vaine hopes of glory: a consideration of wonderfull credit in the world: the other (as *Plato* saith) that it is a most profitable impression, that vices, when they steal away from out the sight and knowledge of humane justice, remaine ever as a blanke before divine justice, which even after the death of the guilty, will severely pursue them. *Man is ever possessed with an extreme desire to prolong his being, and hath to the uttermost of his skill provided for it,* Toombs and Monuments are for the preservation of his body, and glorie for the continuance of his name. He hath imployed all his wit to frame him selfe a new, (as impatient of his fortune) and to underprop or uphold himselfe by his inventions. The soule by reason of her trouble and imbecility, as unable to subsist of her selfe, is ever, and in all places questing and searching comforts, hopes, foundations, and forraine circumstances, on which she may take hold and settle her selfe. And how light and fantastickall soever his invention doth frame them unto him, he notwithstanding relieth more surely upon them, and more willingly, than upon himselfe: But it is a wonder to see how the most obstinat in this so just and manifest perswasion of our spirits immortalitie, have found themselves short and un-

CHAP.  
XII

An Apol  
of Rayn  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

able to establish the same by their humane forces. *Somnia sunt non docentis, sed optantis.* These are dreames not of one that teacheth, but wisheth what he would have: said an ancient Writer. Man may by his owne testimonie know, that the truth he alone discovereth, the same he oweth unto fortune and chance; since even when she is false into his hands, he wanteth wherewith to lay hold on her, and keepe her; and that this reason hath not the power to prevaile with it. *All things produced by our owne discourse and sufficiencie, as well true as false, are subject to uncertaintie and disputation.* It is for the punishment of our temeritie, and instruction of our miserie and incapacitie, that God caused the trouble, downefall and confusion of *Babels* Tower. Whatsoever we attempt without his assistance, what ever we see without the lampe of his grace, is but vanity and folly: With our weaknes we corrupt and adulterate the very essence of truth (which is uniforme and constant) when fortune giveth us the possession of it. What course soever man taketh of himselfe, it is Gods permission that he ever commeth to that confusion, whose image he so lively representeth unto us, by the just punishment, wherewith he framed the presumptuous over-weening of *Nembroth*, and brought to nothing the frivolous enterprises of the building of his high-towring Pyramides, or Heaven-menacing Tower. *Perdam sapientiam sapientium, et prudentiam prudentium reprobabo* (1 Cor. i. 19). *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and reprove the providence of them that are most prudent.* The diversitie of tongues and languages, wherewith he disturbed that worke, and overthrew that proudly-raised Pile; what else is it, but this infinit altercation, and perpetuall discordance of opinions and reasons, which accompanieth and entangleth the frivolous frame of mans learning, or vaine building of humane science?

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Which he doth most profitably. *Who might containe us, had we but one graine of knoweledge?* This Saint hath done me much pleasure: *Ipsa utilitatis occultatio, aut humilitatis exercitatio est, aut elationis attritio.* The very concealing of the profit, is either an exercise of humilitie, or a beating downe of arrogancie. Unto what point of presumption and insolencie, do we not carrie our blindnesse and foolishnesse? But to returne to my purpose: Verily there was great reason, that we should be beholding to God alone, and to the benefit of his grace, for the truth of so noble a beliefe, since from his liberalitie alone we receive the fruit of immortalitie, which consisteth in enjoying of eternall blessednesse. Let us ingenuously confesse, that only God and Faith, hath told it us: For, it is no lesson of Nature, nor coming from our reason. And he that shall both within and without narrowly sift, and curiously sound his being and his forces without this divine privilege; he that shall view and consider man, without flattering him, shall nor finde nor see either efficacie or facultie in him, that tasteth of any other thing but death and earth. *The more we give, the more we owe; and the more we yeeld unto God, the more Christian-like doe we.* That which the Stoike Philosopher said, he held by the casuall consent of the peoples voice; had it not beene better he had held it of God? *Cum de animorum aeternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos aut colentium. Utor hac publica persuasione* (SEN. Epist. 117). *When we discourse of the immortalitie of soules in my conceit the consent of those men is of no small authority, who either feare or adore the infernall powers. This publike perswasion I make use of.* Now the weaknes of humane Arguments upon this subject, is very manifestly knowne by the fabulous circumstances they

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

have added unto the traine of this opinion, to finde out what condition this our immortalitie was of. Let us omit the Stoickes. *Usuram nobis largiuntur, tanquam cornicibus; diu mansuros aiunt animos, semper negant* (Cic. *Tusc. Qu. i.*). They grant us use of life, as is unto Ravens: they say, our soules shall long continue, but they deny they shall last ever. Who [give] unto soules a life beyond this but finite. The most universall and received fantasie, and which endureth to this day, hath beene that whereof *Pythagoras* is made Author; not that he was the first inventor of it, but because it received much force and credit by the authoritie of his approbation; Which is, that soules at their departure from us, did but passe and roule from one to another body, from a Lyon to a Horse, from a Horse to a King, incessantly wandring up and downe, from House to Mansion. And himselfe said, that he remembred to have beene *Æthaledes*, then *Euphorbus*, afterward *Hermotimus*, at last from *Pyrrhus* to have passed into *Pythagoras*: having memorie of himselfe, the space of two hundred and six yeares: some added more, that the same soules doe sometimes ascend up to heaven, and come downe againe:

*O Pater anne aliquas ad cælum hinc ire putandum est  
Sublimes animas, iterumque ad tarda reverti  
Corpora? Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido?*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vi. 739.

Must we thinke (Father) some soules hence doe go,  
Raized to heav'n, thence turne to bodies slow?  
Whence doth so dyre desire of light on wretches grow?

*Origen* makes them eternally to go and come from a good, to a bad estate. The opinion that *Varro* reporteth is, that in the revolution of foure hundred and forty yeares, they reconjoyne them-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

selves unto their first bodies. *Chrysippus*, that that must come to passe after a certaine space of time unknowne, and not limitted. *Plato* (who saith that he holds this opinion from *Pindarus*, and from ancient Poesie,) of infinite Vicissitudes of alteration, to which the soule is prepared, having no paines nor rewards in the other World, but temporall, as her life in this is but temporall, concludeth in her a singular knowledge of the affaires of Heaven, of Hell, and here below, where she hath passed, repassed, and sojourned in many voyages; a matter in his remembrance. Behold her progresse elsewhere: He that hath lived well, reconjoyneth himselfe unto that Star or Planet, to which he is assigned: Who evill, passeth into a woman: And if then he amend not himselfe, he transchangeth himselfe into a beast, of condition agreeing to his vicious customes, and shall never see an end of his Punishments, untill he returne to his naturall condition, and by vertue of reason, he have deprived himselfe of those grosse, stupide, and elementarie qualities that were in him. But I will not forget the objection, which the Epicureans make unto this transmigration from one body to another: Which is very pleasant. They demand, what order there should be, if the throng of the dying should be greater than that of such as be borne. For, the soules removed from their abode would throng and strive together, who should get the best seat in this new case: And demand besides, what they would passe their time about, whilst they should stay, untill any other mansion were made ready for them: Or contrary-wise, if more creatures were borne than should dye; they say, bodies should be in an ill taking, expecting the infusion of their soule, and it would come to passe, that some of them should dye, before they had ever beene living.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymoud  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Denique connubia ad veneris, partusque ferarum  
Esse animas præsto deridiculum esse videtur,  
Et spectare immortales mortalia membra  
Innumero numero, certareque præproperanter  
Inter se, quæ prima potissimaque insinuetur.*

—LUCR. iii. 802.

Lastly, ridiculous it is, soules should be prest  
To *Venus* meetings, and begetting of a beast:  
That they to mortall lims immortall be addrest  
In number numberlesse, and over-hasty strive,  
Which of them first and chiefe should get in there to live.

Others have staid the soule in the deceased bodies, therwith to animate serpents, wormes and other beasts, which are said to engender from the corruption of our members, yea and from our ashes: Others, divide it in two parts, one mortall, another immortal: Others, make it corporeall, and yet notwithstanding immortall: Others, make it immortall, without any science or knowledge. Nay there are some of ours, who have deemed, that of condemned mens soules divels were made: As *Plutarke* thinks, that Gods are made of those soules which are saved: For, there be few things that this authour doth more resolutely averre, then this; holding every where else an ambiguous and doubtfull kind of speech. It is to be imagined and firmlie believed (saith he) that the soules of men, vertuous both according unto nature and divine Justice, become of Men, Saints, and of Saints, Demi-Gods, and after they are once perfectly, as in sacrifices of purgation, cleansed and purified, being delivered from all passibility and mortalitie, they become of demi-Gods (not by any civill ordinance, but in good truth, and according to manifest reason) perfect and very very Gods; receiving a most blessed and thrice glorious end. But whosoever shall see him, who is notwithstanding, one of the most sparing and moderate of that faction, so undantedly to skirmish, and will heare him relate his wonders



## THE SECOND BOOKE

upon this subject, him I refer to his discourse of the Moone, and of *Socrates* his Dæmon; where as evidently as in any other place, may be averred, that the mysteries of Philosophy have many strange conceits, common with those of Poesie; mans understanding losing it selfe; [if it] once goe about to sound and controule all things to the utmost ende; as tired and troubled by a long and wearisome course of our life, we returne to a kind of doting childhood. Note here the goodly and certaine instructions, which concerning our soules-subject we drawe from humane knowledge. There is no lesse rashnesse in that which shee teacheth us touching our corporall parts. Let us make choyse but of one or two examples, else should we lose our selves in this troublesome and vaste Ocean of Physicall errors. Let us know whether they agree but in this one, that is to say, of what matter men are derived and produced one from another. For, touching their first production, it is no marvel if in a thing so high and so ancient, mans wit is troubled and confounded. *Archelaus* the Physition, to whom (as *Aristoxenus* affirmeth) *Socrates* was Disciple and Minion, assevered that both men and beastes had beene made of milkie slime or mudde, expressed by the heate of the earth. *Pythagoras* saith, that our seed is the scumme or froth of our best blood, *Plato* the distilling of the marrow in the backe-bone, which hee argueth thus, because that place feeleth first the wearinesse which followeth the generative businesse.

*Alcmaeon*, a part of the braines-substance, which to prove, he saith, their eyes are ever most troubled, that over-intemperately addict themselves to that exercise. *Democritus*, a substance extracted from all parts of this corporall Masse. *Epicurus*, extracted from the soule and the body: *Aristotle*, an excrement drawne from the nourishment of the bloud, the last

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

scattereth it selfe in our severall members; others, blood, concocted and digested by the heate of the genitories, which they judge, because in the extreame, earnest and forced labours, many shed drops of pure blood; wherein some appearance seemeth to be, if from so infinite a confusion any likelihood may be drawne. But to bring this seed to effect, how many contrary opinions make they of it? *Aristotle* and *Democritus* hold, that women have no sperme, that it is but a sweate, which by reason of the pleasure, and frication they cast forth, and availeth nothing in generation.

*Galen*, and his adherents, contrariwise affirme, that there can be no generation, except two seeds meete together. Behold the Physitians, the Philosophers, the Lawyers, and the Divines pell-mell together by the eares with our women about the question and disputation how long women beare their fruite in their wombe. And as for mee, by mine owne example I take their part, that maintaine, a woman may goe eleven months with childe. The world is framed of this experience; there is no meane woman so simple, that cannot give her censure upon all these contestations, although we could not agree. *This is sufficient to verifie, that in the corporall part, man is no more instructed of himselfe, then in the spirituall.* We have proposed himselfe to himselfe, and his reason to his reason, to see what shee can tell us of it. Mee thinkes I have sufficiently declared, how little understanding shee hath of her selfe. And hee who hath no understanding of himselfe, what can he have understanding of? *Quasi verò mensuram ullius rei possit agere qui sui nesciat* (*PLIN. Nat. Hist. ii. cap. 1*). *As though he could take measure of any thing that knowes not his owne measure.* Truly *Protogoras* told us prettie tales, when hee makes man the measure of all

## THE SECOND BOOKE

things, who never knew so much as his owne. If it be not he, his dignitie will never suffer any other creature to have this advantage over him. Now he being so contrary in himselfe, and one judgement so uncessantly subverting another, this favorable proposition was but a jest, which induced us necessarily to conclude the nullity of the Compasse and the Compasser. *When Thales judgeth the knowledge of man very hard unto man, hee teacheth him the knowledge of all other things to be impossible unto him.* You for whom I have taken the paines to enlarge so long a worke (against my custome) will not shun to maintaine your *Sebond*, with the ordinary forme of arguing, whereof you are daily instructed, and will therein exercise both your minde and study: For this last trick of fence, must not be employed but as an extreme remedy. It is a desperate thrust, gainst which you must forsake your weapons, to force your adversary to renounce his, and a secret slight, which must seldome and very sparingly be put in practise. *It is a great fond-hardnesse to lose our selfe for the losse of another.* A man must not be willing to die to revenge himselfe, as *Gobrias* was: who being close by the eares with a Lord of *Persia*, *Darius* chanced to come in with his sword in his hand, and fearing to stricke, for feare he should hurt *Gobrias*, he called unto him, and bade him smite boldly, although he should smite through both (*JUSTIN. i.*). I have heard, armes, and conditions of single combates being desperate, and in which he that offered them, put both himselfe and his enemy in danger of an end inevitable to both, reproved as unjust, and condemned as unlawfull. The *Portugals* tooke once certaine *Turkes* prisoners in the *Indian* seas, who impatient of their captivity, resolved with themselves (and their resolution succeeded) by rubbing of Ship-nailes one

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

against another, and causing sparkles of fire to fall amongst the barrels of powder (which lay not far from them) with intent to consume both themselves, their masters, and the ship. *We but touch the skirts, and glance at the last closings of Sciences, wherein extremity, as well as in vertue, is vicious.* Keepe your selves in the common path, it is not good to be so subtile, and so curious. Remember what the Italian proverbe saith,

*Chi troppo s' assottiglia, si scavezza.*

—PETR. p. i. canz. xiii. 48.

Who makes himselfe too fine,  
Doth break himselfe in fine.

*I perswade you, in your opinions and discourses, as much as in your customes, and in every other thing, to use moderation and temperance, and avoide all new-fangled inventions and strangenesse.* All extravagant waies displease me. You, who by the authority and preheminance, which your greatnesse hath laied upon you, and more by the advantages, which the qualities that are most your owne, bestow on you, may with a nod command whom you please, should have laied this charge upon some one, that had made profession of learning, who might otherwise have disposed and enriched this fantasie. Notwithstanding here have you enough to supply your wants of it.

Epicurus said of the lawes, that the worst were so necessary unto us, that without them, men would enter-devoure one another. And *Plato* verifieth, that *without lawes we should live like beastes.* Our spirit is a vagabond, a dangerous, and fond-hardy implement; It is very hard to joyne order and measure to it. In my time, such as have any rare excellency above others, or extraordinary vivacity, we see them almost all so lavish and unbridled in licence of opinions and manners, as it may be counted a wonder to find any



## THE SECOND BOOKE

one settled and sociable. There is great reason why the spirit of man should be so strictly imbarred. In his study, as in all things else, he must have his steps numbred and ordered. The limits of his pursuite must be cut out by art. He is bridled and fettered with, and by religions, lawes, customes, knowledge, precepts, paines and recompences, both mortall and immortall; yet we see him, by meanes of his volubility and dissolution escape all these bonds. It is a vaine body, that hath no way about him to be seized on, or cut off: a diverse and deformed body, on which neither knot nor hold may be fastened. Verily there are few soules, so orderly, so constant, and so well borne, as may be trusted with their owne conduct, and may with moderation, and without rashnes, saile in the liberty of their judgments beyond common opinions. It is more expedient to give some body the charge and tuition of them. *The spirit is an outrageous glaive, yea even to his owne possessor, except he have the grace, very orderly and discreetly to arme himselfe therewith.* And there is no beast, to whom one may more justly apply a blinding bord, to keepe her sight in, and force her looke to her footing, and keepe from straying here and there, without the tracke which use and lawes trace her out. Therefore shall it be better for you to close and bound your selves in the accustomed path; howsoever it be, then to take your flight to this unbridled licence. But if any one of these new doctors shall undertake, to play the wise or ingenious before you, at the charge of his and your health: to rid you out of this dangerous plague, which daily more and more spreads it selfe in your Courts, this preservative will in any extreame necessity be a let, that the contagion of this venome, shall neither offend you nor your assistance. The liberty then, and the jollity of their ancient spirits brought forth many different Sects of

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raynold  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

opinions, in Philosophy and humane Sciences: every one undertaking to judge and chuse, so he might raise a faction. But now that men walke all one way: *Qui certis quibusdam destinatisque sententiis addicti et consecrati sunt, ut etiam, quæ non probant, cogantur defendere* (CIC. Tusc. Qu. ii.): *Who are addicted and consecrated to certaine set and fore-decreed opinions, so as they are enforced to maintaine those things which they prove or approve not:* And that we receive Artes by civill authority and appointment: So that Schooles have but one patterne, alike circumscribed discipline and institution; no man regardeth more what coines weigh and are worth; but every man in his turne receiveth them according to the value, that common approbation and succession allotteth them; Men dispute no longer of the alloy, but of the use, So are all things spent and vented alike. Physike is received as Geometry: and jugling tricks, enchantments, bonds, the commerce of deceased spirits, prognostications, domifications, yea even this ridiculous, wit and wealth-consuming peruite of the Philosophers stone, all is employed and uttered without contradiction. It sufficeth to know, that *Mars* his place lodgeth in the middle of the hands triangle; that of *Venus* in the Thumme; and *Mercuries* in the little finger: and when the table-line cutteth the teachers rising, it is a signe of cruelty: When it faileth under the middle finger, and that the naturall Median-line makes an angle with the vitall, under the same side, it is a signe of a miserable death: And when a womans naturall line is open, and closes not at angle with the vitall, it evidently denotes that she will not be very chaste. I call your selfe to witnesse if with this Science onely, a man may not passe with reputation and favour among all companies. *Theophrastus* was wont to say, that mans knowledge, directed by the sense,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

might judge of the causes of things, unto a certain measure, but being come to the extreame and first causes, it must necessarily stay, and be blunted or abated; either by reason of it's weaknesse, or of the things difficulty. It is an indifferent and pleasing kind of opinion, to thinke, that our sufficieney may bring us to the knowledge of some things, and hath certaine measures of power, beyond which it's temerity to employ it. This opinion is plausible and brought in by way of composition: but it is hard to give our spirit any limits, being very curious and greedy, and not tied to stay rather at a thousand, than at fifty [paces]. Having found by experience, that if one had mist to attaine unto some one thing, another hath come unto it, and that which one age never knew, the age succeeding hath found out: and that Sciences and Arts are not cast in a mold, but rather by little and little formed and shaped by often handling and pollishing them over: even as beares fashion their yong whelps by often licking them: what my strength cannot discover, I cease not to sound and try: and in handling and kneading this new matter and with removing and chafing it, I open some [facility] for him that shall follow me, that with more ease he may enjoy the same, and make it more facile, more supple and more pliable:

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*ut hymettia sole*

*Cera remollescit, tractataque pollice, multas  
Vertitur in facies, ipsoque fit utilis usu.*

—OVID, *Metam.* x. 284.

As the best Bees wax melteth by the Sun,  
And handling, into many formes doth run,  
And is made aptly fit,  
For use, by using it.

As much will the second do for the third, which is a cause that difficulty doth not make me despaire, much lesse my inability: for it is but mine owne.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Man is as well capable of all things, as of some. And if (as *Theophrastus* saith) he avow the ignorance of the first causes and beginnings, let him hardly quit all the rest of his knowledge. If his foundation faile him, his discourse is overthrowne. *The dispute hath no other scope, and to enquire no other end but the principles:* If this end stay not his course, he casteth himselfe into an infinite irresolution. *Non potest aliud alio magis minusque comprehendere, quoniam omnium rerum una est definitio comprehendendi.* One thing can neither more nor lesse be comprehended then another, since of all things there is one definition of comprehending. Now it is likely, that if the soule knew any thing, shee first knew her selfe: and if she knew any without and besides her selfe, it must be her vaile and body before any thing else. If even at this day the Gods of Physicke are seene to wrangle about our Anatomie,

*Mulciber in Troiam, pro Troia stabat Apollo,*  
—Ovid, *Trist.* i. El. ii. 5.

*Apollo stood for Troy,*  
*Vulcan Troy to destroy,*

when shall we expect that they will be agreed? We are neerer, unto our selves, then is whitenesse unto snow, or weight unto a stone. *If man know not himselfe, how can hee know his functions and forces?* It is not by fortune that some true notice doth not lodge with us, but by hazard. And forasmuch as by the same way, fashion and conduct, errours are received into our soule, she hath not wherewithall to distinguish them, nor whereby to chuse the truth from falshood. The Academikes received some inclination of judgment, and found it over raw, to say, it was no more likely snow should be white then blacke, and that wee should be no more assured of the moving of a stone, which goeth from our hand,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

then of that of the eighth Spheare. And to avoid this difficultie and strangenesse, which in truth cannot but hardly lodge in our imagination, howbeit they establish, that we were no way capable of knowledge, and that truth is engulfed in the deepest Abysses, where mans sight can no way enter; yet avowed they some things to be more likely and possible then others, and received this faculty in their judgement, that they might rather incline to one apparance then to another. They allowed her this propension, interdicting her all resolution. The Pyrrhonians advise is more hardy, and therewithall more likely. For this Academicall inclination, and this propension rather to one then another proposition, what else is it, then a reacknowledging of some apparant truth, in this than in that? If our understanding be capable of the forme, of the lineaments, of the behaviour and face of truth; it might as well see it all compleat; as but halfe, growing and imperfect. For this apparance of verisimilitude, which makes them rather take the left then the right hand, doe you augment it; this one ounce of likelihood, which turnes the ballance, doe you multiply it, by a hundred, nay by a thousand ounces; it will in the end come to passe, that the ballance will absolutely resolve and conclude one choice and perfect truth. But how doe they suffer themselves to be made tractable by likelihood, if they know not truth? *How knowe they the semblance of that, whereof they understand not the essence?* Either we are able to judge absolutely, or absolutely we cannot. If our intellectuall and sensible faculties are without ground or footing, if they but hull up and downe and drive with the wind, for nothing suffer we our judgment to be caried away to any part of their operation, what apparance soever it seemeth to present us with. And the surest and most happy situation of our under-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

standing should be that, where without any tottering or agitation it might maintaine it selfe settled, upright and inflexible. *Inter visa, vera, aut falsa, ad animi assensum, nihil interest* (Cic. Acad. Q. iv.). *There is no difference betwixt true and false visions, concerning the mindes assent.* That things lodge not in us in their proper forme and essence, and make not their entrance into us, of their owne power and authority, we see it most evidently. For if it were so, we would receive them all alike: wine should be such in a sicke mans mouth, as in a healthy mans. He whose fingers are chopt through cold, and stiffe or benumbed with frost, should find the same hardnesse in the wood or iron he might handle, which another doth. Then strange subjects yeeld unto our mercy, and lodge with us according to our pleasure. Now if on our part we receive any thing without alteration, if mans holdfasts were capable and sufficiently powerfull, by our proper meanes to seize on truth, those meanes being common to all; this truth would successively remove it selfe from one to another. And of so many things as are in the world, at least one should be found, that by an universall consent should be beleaved of all. But that no proposition is seene, which is not controversied and debated amongst us, or that may not be, declareth plainly, that our judgment doth not absolutly and clearly seize on that which it seizeth: for my judgment cannot make my fellowes judgment to receive the same: which is a signe, that I have seized upon it by some other meane then by a naturall power in me or other men. Leave we apart this infinite confusion of opinions, which is seene amongst Philosophers themselves, and this universall and perpetuall disputation, in and concerning the knowledge of things.

For it is most truly presupposed, that men (I



## THE SECOND BOOKE

meane the wisest, the best borne, yea and the most sufficient) do never agree; no not so much that heaven is over our heads: For they who doubt of all, doe also doubt of this: and such as affirme, that we cannot conceive any thing, say, we have not conceivd whether heaven be over our heads: which two opinions are in number (without any comparison) the most forcible. Besides this diversity and infinite division, by reason of the trouble which our owne judgement layeth upon our selves, and the uncertainty which every man findes in himselfe, it may manifestly be perceived, that this situation is very uncertaine and unstaid. How diversly judge we of things? How often change we our phantasies? What I hold and beleeeve this day, I beleeeve and hold with all my beleefe; all my implements, springs and motions, embrace and claspe this opinion, and to the utmost of their power warrant the same: I could not possibly embrace any verity, nor with more assurance keepe it, then I doe this. I am wholly and absolutely given to it; but hath it not beene my fortune, not once, but a hundred, nay a thousand times, my daily, to have embraced some other thing, with the very same instruments and condition, which upon better advise I have afterward judged false? *A man should at the least become wise, at his owne cost, and learne by others harmes.* If under this colour I have often found my selfe deceived, if my Touch-stone be commonly found false and my ballance un-even and unjust; What assurance may I more take of it at this time, then at others? Is it not folly in me, to suffer my selfe so often to be beguiled and couzened by one guide? Neverthelesse, let fortune remove us five hundred times from our place, let her doe nothing but uncessantly empty and fill, as in a vessell, other and other opinions in our mind, the

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

present and last is alwaies supposed certaine and infallible. For this must a man leave goods, honour, life, state, health and all:

—*posterior res illa reperta  
Perdit; et immutat sensus ad pristina quæque,*  
—LUCR. v. 1424.

The latter thing destroies all found before;  
And alters sense at all things lik'd of yore.

Whatsoever is told us, and what ever we learne, we should ever remember, it is man, who delivereth, and man that receiveth; It is a mortall hand, that presents it, and a mortall hand, that receives it. Onely things which come to us from heaven, have right and authority of perswasion, and markes of truth; Which we neither see with our eyes, nor receive by our meanes; this sacred and great image would be of no force in so wretched a Mansion, except God prepare it to that use and purpose, unlesse God by his particular grace and supernaturall favor, reforme and strengthen the same. Our fraile and defective condition ought at least make us demeane our selves more moderately, and more circumspectly in our changes. We should remember, that whatsoever we receive in our understanding, we often receive false things, and that it is by the same instruments, which many times contradict and deceive themselves. And no marvell if they contradict themselves, being so easie to encline, and upon very slight occasions subject to waver and turne. Certaine it is, that our apprehension, our judgement, and our soules faculties in generall, doe suffer according to the bodies motions and alterations, which are continuall. Have we not our spirits more vigilant, our memorie more ready, and our discourses more lively in time of health, then



## THE SECOND BOOKE

in sicknesse? Doth not joy and blithnesse make us receive the subjects, that present themselv's unto our soule, with another kind of countenance, then lowring vexation, and drooping melancholy doth? Doe you imagine, that *Catullus* or *Saphoes* verses, delight and please an old covetous Chuff-penny wretch, as they do a lusty and vigorous yong-man? *Cleomenes* the sonne of *Anaxandridas* being sick, his friends reproved him, saying, he had new strange humors, and unusuall phantasies: It is not unlikely (answered he) for, I am not the man I was wont to be in the time of health: But being other, so are my fantasies and my humors. In the rabble case-canvassing of our plea-courts this by-word, *Gaudeat de bona fortuna*, *Let him joy in his good fortune*, is much in use, and is spoken of criminall offenders, who happen to meete with Judges in some milde temper, or well-pleased mood. For it is most certaine that in times of condemnation, the Judges doome or sentence is sometimes perceived to be more sharpe, mercilesse and forward, and at other times more tractable, facile, and enclined to shadow or excuse an offence, according as he is well or ill pleased in mind. A man that commeth out of his house troubled with the paine of the gout, vexed with jealousy, or angry that his servant hath robbed him, and whose mind is overcome with griefe, and plunged with vexation, and distracted with anger, there is not question to be made but his judgement is at that instant much distempred, and much transported that way. *That venerable Senate of the Areopagites, was wont to judge and sentence by night, for feare the sight of the suters might corrupt justice.* The ayre it selfe, and the clearenes of the firmament, doth forbode us some change and alteration of weather, as saith that Greeke verse in *Cicero*,

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse  
Jupiter auctifera lustravit lampade terras.—Cic. ex incert.*

Such are mens mindes, as with increasefull light  
Our father *Jove* survaies the world in sight.

It is not onely fevers, drinckes and great accidents, that over-whelme our judgement: The least things in the world wil turne it topsieturvie. And although we feele it not, it is not to bee doubted, if a continuall ague may in the end suppress our mind, a tertian will also (according to her measure and proportion) breed some alteration in it. If an Apoplexie doth altogether stupifie, and extinguish the sight of our understanding, it is not to be doubted but a cold and rhume will likewise dazle the same. And by consequence, hardly shall a man in all his life find one houre, wherein our judgement may alwaies be found in his right byase, our body being subject to so many continuall alterations, and stuff with so divers sorts of ginnings and motions, that, giving credit to Physitions, it is very hard to find one in perfect plight, and that doth not alwaies mistake his marke and shute wide. As for the rest, this disease is not so easily discovered, except, it be altogether extreame and remedillesse; forasmuch as reason marcheth ever crooked, halting and broken-hipt; and with falshood as with truth; And therefore it is very hard to discover her mistaking, and disorder. I alwaies call reason, that apparence or shew of discourses, which every man deviseth or forgeth in himselfe: That reason, of whose condition, there may be a hundred, one contrary to another, about one selfe same subject: It is an instrument of lead and Wax, stretching, pliable, and that may be fitted to all byases, and squared to all measures: There remaines nothing but the skill and sufficiency to know how to turne and winde the same. How well soever a Judge meaneth

## THE SECOND BOOKE

and what good mind so ever he beareth, if diligent eare be not given unto him (to which few amuse themselves) his inclination unto freindship, unto kindred, unto beauty, and unto revenge, and not onely matters of so weighty consequence, but this innated and casuall instinct, which makes us to favour one thing more then another, and encline to one man more then to another, and which without any leave of reason, giveth us the choise, in two like subjects, or some shadow of like vanity, may insensibly insinuate in his judgment the commendation and applause, or disfavour and disallowance of a cause, and give the ballance a twitch. I that nearest prie into my selfe and who have mine eyes uncessantly fixt upon me, as one that hath not much else to doe else where,

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

—*quis sub Arcto  
Rex gelidæ metuitur ora,  
Quid Tyridatem terreat unice  
Securus,*

—Hon. i. Od. xxvi. 3.

Onely secure, who in cold coast  
Under the North-pole rules the roost,  
And there is fear'd; or what would fright,  
And Tyridates put to flight,

dare very hardly report the vanity and weaknesse I feele in my selfe. My foot is so staggering and unstable, and I finde it so ready to trip, and so easie to stumble; and my sight is so dimme and uncertaine, that fasting I finde my selfe other than full fed: If my health applaud me, or but the calmenesse of one faire day smile upon me, then am I a lusty gallant; but if a corne wring my toe, then am I pouting, unpleasant and hard to be pleased. One same pace of a horse is sometimes hard, and sometimes easie unto me; and one same way, one time short, another time long and wearisome; and one same forme, now more, now lesse agreeable and pleasing to me:



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Sometimes I am apt to doe any thing ; and other times fit to doe nothing : What now is pleasing to me, within a while after will be paineful. There are a thousand indiscreet and casuall agitations in me. Either a melancholy humour possesseth me, or a cholericke passion swaieth me, which having shaken off, sometimes frowardnesse and peevishnesse hath predominancy, and other times gladnes and blithenesse overrule me. If I chance to take a booke in hand, I shall in some passages perceive some excellent graces, and which ever wound me to the soule with delight ; but let me lay it by, and read him another time ; let me turne and tosse him as I list, let me apply and manage him as I will, I shall finde it an unknowne and shapelesse masse. Even in my writings, I shall not at all times finde the tracke, or ayre of my first imaginations ; I wot not my selfe what I would have said, and shall vexe and fret my selfe in correcting and giving a new sense to them, because I have peradventure forgotten or lost the former, which happily was better. I do but come and goe ; my judgement doth not alwaies goe forward, but is ever floting, and wandering,

—*velut minuta magno*  
*Deprensa navis in mari vesaniente vento.*  
—CATUL. *Lyr. Epig.* xxii. 12.

Much like a pettie skiffe, that's taken short  
In a grand Sea, when winds doe make mad sport.

Many times (as commonly it is my hap to doe) having for exercise and sport-sake undertaken to maintaine an opinion contrarie to mine, my minde applying and turning it selfe that way, doth so tie me unto it, as I finde no more the reason of my former conceit, and so I leave it. Where I encline, there I entertaine my selfe, how soever it be, and am caried away by mine owne weight. Every man could neer-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

hand say as much of himselfe, would he but looke into himselfe as I doe. Preachers know, that the emotion, which surpriseth them, whilst they are in their earnest speech, doth animate them towards beliefe, and that being angrie we more violently give our selves to defend our proposition, emprint it in our selves, and embrace the same with more vehemencie and approbation, then we did, being in our temperate and reposed sense. You relate simply your case unto a Lawyer; he answers faltring and doubtfully unto it, whereby you perceive it is indifferent unto him to defend either this or that side, all is one to him: Have you paid him well, have you given him a good baite or fee, to make him earnestly apprehend it, beginnes he to be enteressed in the matter, is his will moved, or his minde enflamed? Then will his reason be moved, and his knowledge enflamed with all. See then an apparant and undoubted truth presents it selfe to his understanding, wherein he discovers a new light, and beleeves it in good sooth, and so perswades himselfe. Shall I tell you? I wot not whether the heate proceeding of spight and obstinacie, against the impression and violence of a magistrate, and of danger: or the interest of reputation, have induced some man, to maintaine, even in the fiery flames the opinion, for which amongst his friends, and at libertie, he would never have beene moved, nor have ventred his fingers end. The motions and fits which our soule receiveth by corporall passions, doe greatly prevaile in her, but more her owne; with which it is so fully possest, as happily it may be maintained, she hath no other way, or motion, then by the blast of her windes, and that without their agitation, she should remaine without action, as a ship at Sea, which the winds have utterly forsaken. And he who should maintaine that, following the Peripatetike faction, should offer us no

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

great wrong, since it is knowne, that the greatest number of the soules actions, proceede and have neede of this impulsion of passion; valor (say they) cannot be perfected without the assistance of choler.

*Semper Ajax fortis, fortissimus tamen in furore.*

—Cic. *Tus. Qu.* iv.

*Ajax* every valor had,  
Most then, when he was most mad.

Nor doth any man run violently enough upon the wicked, or his enemies, except he be thoroughly angrie; and they are of opinion, that an Advocate or Counsellor at the barre, to have the cause goe on his side, and to have Justice at the Judges hands, doth first endeavor to provoke him to anger. Longing-desires moved *Themistocles*, and urged *Demosthenes*, and have provoked Philosophers, to long travels, to tedious watchings, and to lingring peregrinations: and leade us to honours, to doctrine, and to health; all profitable respects. And this demissenes of the soule, in suffering molestation and tediousnes, serveth to no other purpose, but to breed repentance, and cause penitence in our consciences; and for our punishment to feele the scourge of God, and the rod of politicke correction. Compassion serveth as a sting unto clemencie, and wisdom to preserve and governe our selves, is by our owne feare rouzed up; and how many noble actions, by ambition, how many by presumption? *To conclude, no eminent or glorious vertue, can be without some immoderate and irregular agitation.* May not this be one of the reasons, which moved the Epicurians, to discharge God of all care and thought of our affaires: Forsomuch as the very effects of his goodnes, cannot exercise themselves towards us, without disturbing his rest, by meanes of the passions, which are as motives and solicitations, directing the soule to vertuous actions? Or have



## THE SECOND BOOKE

they thought otherwise and taken them as tempests, which shamfully lead astray the soule from hir rest and tranquillitie? *Ut maris tranquillitas intelligitur, nullâ, ne minimâ quidem, aurâ fluctus commovente; Sic animi quietus et placatus status cernitur, quum perturbatio nulla est, quâ moveri queat* (Cic. *ib.* v.). *As we conceive the Seas calmenesse, when not so much as the least pirling wind doth stirre the waves, so is a peaceable reposed state of the mind then scene, when there is no perturbation, whereby it may be moved.* What differences of sense and reason, what contrarietie of imaginations, doth the diversitie of our passions present unto us? What assurance may we then take of so unconstant and wavering a thing, subject by its owne condition to the power of trouble, never marching but a forced and borrowed pace? If our judgement be in the hands of sickenes itselfe, and of perturbation; if by rashnesse and folly it be retained to receive the impression of things, what assurance may we expect at his hands? Does not Philosophie thinke that men produce their greatest effects, and neerest approaching to divinity, when they are besides themselves, furious, and madde? We amend our selves by the privation of reason, and by her drooping. The two naturall waies, to enter the cabinet of the Gods, and there to foresee the course of the destinies, are furie and sleepe. This is very pleasing to be considered. By the dislocation that passions bring unto our reason, we become vertuous; by the extirpation which either fury or the image of death bringeth us, we become Prophets and Divines. I never beleev'd it more willingly. It is a meere divine inspiration, that sacred truth hath inspired in a Philosophicall spirit, which against his proposition exacteth from him; that the quiet state of our soule, the best-settled estate, yea the healthfullest that Philosophy can acquire unto it, is not the best

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

estate. *Our vigilancie is more drouzie, then sleepe it selfe: Our wisdomes lesse wise, then folly; our dreames of more worth than our discourses.* The worst place we can take, is in our selves. But thinks it not, that we have the foresight to marke, that the voice, which the spirit uttreth, when he is gone from man, so cleare sighted, so great, and so perfect, and whilst he is in man, so earthly, so ignorant, and so overclouded, is a voice proceeding from the spirit, which is in earthly, ignorant, and overclouded man; and therefore a trustles and not to be-beleeved voice? I have no great experience in these violent agitations, being of a soft and dull complexion; the greatest part of which, without giving it leasure to acknowledge her selfe, doe sodainely surprise our soule. But that passion, which in yong mens harts is saied, to be produced by idlenes, although it march but leasurely, and with a measured progresse, doth evidently present to those, that have assaid to oppose themselves against her endeavour, the power of the conversion and alteration, which our judgement suffereth. I have some times enterprised to arme my selfe with a resolution to abide, resist, and suppress the same. For, I am so farre from being in their ranke, that call and allure vices, that unlesse they entertaine me, I scarcely follow them. I felt it, mauger my resistance, to breed, to growe, and to augment; and in the end being in perfect health, and cleare sighted, to seize upon and possesse me; in such sort, that, as in drunkennes, the image of things began to appeare unto me, otherwise then it was wont: I saw the advantages of the subject I sought after, evidently to swell and growe greater, and much to encrease by the winde of my imagination; and the difficulties of my enterprise to become more easie and plaine; and my discourse and conscience to shrink and draw-backe. But that fire being evaporated all on a sodaine, as by

## THE SECOND BOOKE

the flashing of a lightning, my soule to reassume  
 an other sight, another state, and other judgement.  
 The difficultie in my retreate seemed great and in-  
 vincible, and the very same things, of another taste  
 and shew, than the fervency of desire had presented  
 them unto me. And which more truely, *Pyrrho*  
 cannot tell. We are never without some infirmity.  
 Fevers have their heat, and their cold: from the  
 effects of a burning passion, we fall into the effects  
 of a chilling passion. So much as I had cast my selfe  
 forward, so much do I draw my selfe backe.

CHAPTER  
 XII  
 —  
 An Apologie  
 of Raymond  
 Seboud

*Qualis ubi alterno procurrens gurgite pontus,  
 Nunc ruit ad terras, scopulisque superjacet undam,  
 Spumeus, extremamque sinu pertundit arenam,  
 Nunc rapidus retro, atque astu revoluta resorbens  
 Sæva, fugit, latusque vado labente relinquit.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* xi. 508.

As th' Ocean flowing, ebbing in due course,  
 To land now rushes, foming throw's his source  
 On rocks, therewith bedewes the utmost sand,  
 Now swift return's, the stones rould backe from strand  
 By tide resuck's, foord failing, leaves the land.

Now by the knowledge of my volubilitie, I have  
 by accident engndred some constancy of opinions  
 in my selfe; yea have not so much altered my first  
 and naturall ones. For, what apparance soever there  
 be in novelty, I do not easily change, for feare I  
 should lose by the bargaine: And since I am not  
 capable to chuse, I take the choise from others; and  
 keepe my selfe in the seate, that God hath placed  
 me in. Else could I hardly keepe my selfe from  
 continuall rowling. Thus have I by the grace of  
 God preserved my selfe whole (without agitation or  
 trouble of conscience) in the ancient beliefe of our  
 religion, in the midst of so many sects and  
 divisions, which our age hath brought forth. The  
 writings of the ancient fathers (I meane the good,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

the solide, and the serious) doe tempt, and in a manner remove me which way they list. Him that I heare seemeth ever the most forcible. I finde them everie one in his turne to have reason, although they contrary one another. That facility which good witts have to prove any thing they please, likely; and that there is nothing so strange, but they will undertake to set so good a glosse on it, as it shall easily deceive a simplicity like unto mine, doth manifestly shew the weaknesse of their prooffe. The heavens and the planets have moved these three thousand yeares, and all the world beleevd as much, until *Cleanthes* the *Samian*, or else (according to *Theophrastus*) *Nicetas* the *Syracusan* tooke upon him to maintaine, it was the earth that moved, by the oblique circle of the *Zodiacke*, turning about her axell tree. And in our daies *Copernicus* hath so well grounded this doctrine, that hee doth very orderly fit it to all Astrologicall consequences. What shall we reape by it, but only that wee neede not care, which of the two it be? And who knoweth whether a thousand yeares hence a third opinion will rise, which happily shall overthrow these two præcedent?

*Sic volvenda ætas commutat tempora rerum,  
Quodque fuit pretio, fit nullo denique honore,  
Porro aliud succedit, et è contemptibus exit,  
Inque dies magis appetitur, floretque repertum  
Laudibus, et miro est mortales inter honore.*

—LUCR. v. 1286.

So age to be past-over alter's times of things:  
What earst was most esteem'd,  
At last nought-worth is deem'd:  
Another then succeeds, and from contempt upsprings,  
Is daily more desir'd, flowreth as found but then  
With praise and wondrous honor amongst mortall men.

So when any new doctrine is represented unto us, we have great cause to suspect it, and to consider,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

how, before it was invented, the contrary unto it was in credit; and as that hath beene reversed by this latter, a third invention may peradventure succeed in after-ages, which in like sort shall front the second. Before the principles, which *Aristotle* found out, were in credit, other principles contented mans reason, as his doe now content us. What learning have these men, what particular priviledge, that the course of our invention should rely only upon them, and that the possession of our beleife shall for ever hereafter belong to them? They are no more exempted from being rejected, then were their fore-fathers. If any man urge me with a new Argument, it is in me to imagine, that if I cannot answer it, another can. For, *to believe all apparences, which we cannot resolve, is meere simplicitie.* It would then follow, that all the common sort (whereof we are all part) should have his beleife turning and winding like a weather-cocke: For, his soule being soft, and without resistance, should uncessantly be enforced to receive new and admit other impressions: the latter ever defacing the precedents trace. He that perceiveth himselfe weake, ought to answer, according to law termes, that he will conferre with his learned counsel, or else referre himselfe to the wisest, from whom he hath had his prentiseship. How long is it since Physicke came first into the World? It is reported that a new start-up fellow, whom they call Paracelsus, changeth and subverteth all the order of ancient, and so long time received rules, and maintaineth that untill this day it hath only served to kill people. I thinke he will easily verify it. But I suppose it were no great wisdom to hazard my life upon the triall of his new-fangled experience. *We must not beleieve all men, saith the precept, since every man may say all things.* It is not long since, that one of these professors of novelties, and Physicall reformations

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

told me, that all our forefathers had notoriously abused themselves in the nature and motions of the winds, which, if I should listen unto him, he would manifestly make me perceive. After I had with some patience given attendance to his Arguments, which were indeed full of likelyhood, I demanded of him, whether they that sailed according to *Theophrastus* his Lawes, went westward, when they bent their course eastward? Or whether they sailed sideling, or backward? It is fortune, answered he; but so it is, they tooke their marke amisse: 'To whom I then replied, that I had rather follow the effects, then his reason. They are things that often shock together: and it hath beene told mee, that in Geometry (which supposeth to have gained the high point of certainty amongst all sciences) there are found unavoidable Demonstrations, and which subvert the truth of all experience: As *James Peletier* told me in mine owne house, that he had found out two lines, bending their course one towards another, as if they would meet and joyne together; nevertheless he affirmed, that even unto infinity, they could never come to touch one another. And the Pyrrhonians use their Arguments, and Reason, but to destroy the apparance of experience: And it is a wonder to see how far the suppleness of our reason, hath in this designe followed them, to resist the evidence of effects: For, they affirme, that we move not, that we speake not, that there is no weight, nor heat, with the same force of arguing, that wee averre the most likeliest things. *Ptolomey*, who was an excellent man, had established the bounds of the world; All ancient Philosophers have thought they had a perfect measure thereof, except it were certaine scattered Ilands, which might escape their knowledge: It had beene to Pyrrhonize a thousand yeares agoe, had any man gone about to make a question of the



## THE SECOND BOOKE

art of Cosmography: and the opinions that have beene received therof, of all men in generall: It had beene flat heresie to avouch, that there were Antipodes. See how in our age an infinite greatnesse of firme land hath beene discovered, not an Iland onely, nor one particular country, but a part in greatnesse very neere equall unto that which we knew. Our moderne Geographers cease not to affirme, that now all is found, and all is discovered;

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Nam quod adest præsto, placet, et pullere videtur,*  
—*Ib.* 1422.

For, what is present here,  
Seemes strong, is held most deare.

The question is now, if *Ptolomey* was hertofore deceived in the grounds of his reason, whether it were not folly in me, to trust what these late fellowes say of it, and whether it be not more likely, that this huge body, which we terme the World, is another manner of thing, than we judge it. *Plato* saith, that it often changeth his countenance, that the Heaven, the Starres, and the Sunne do somtimes re-enverse the motion we perceive in them, changing the East into the West. The *Ægyptian* priests told *Herodotus*, that since their first King, which was eleaven thousand and odde yeares (when they made him see the pictures of all their former Kings, drawne to the life in statues) the Sun had changed his course foure times: That the sea and the earth doe enterchangeably change one into another; that the worlds birth is undetermined: The like said *Aristotle* and *Cicero*. And some one amongst us averreth, that it is altogether eternal, [mortal,] and new reviving againe, by many vicissitudes, calling *Salomon* and *Esay* to witnesse: to avoid these oppositions, that God hath sometimes been a Creator without a creature: that he hath beene idle; that he hath unsaid his idlenesse,



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

by setting his hand to this worke, and that by consequence he is subject unto change. In the most famous Schooles of *Greece*, the World is reputed a God, framed by another greater and mightier God, and is composed of a body and a soule, which abideth in his centre, spreading it selfe by Musickall numbers unto his circumference, divine, thrise-happy, very great, most wise and eternall. In it are other Gods, as the Sea, the Earth, and [Planets,] which mutually entertaine one another with an harmonious and perpetuall agitation and celestially dance; sometime meeting, other times farre-sundering themselves; now hiding, then shewing themselves; and changing place, now forward, now backward. *Heraclitus* firmly maintained, that the World was composed of fire, and by the Destinies order, it should one day burst forth into flames, and be so consumed into cinders, and another day it should be new borne againe. And *Apuleius* of men saith; *sigillatim mortales; cunctim perpetui* (L. APUL. de deo Socrat.); severally mortall, altogether everlasting. *Alexander* writ unto his mother the narration of an *Ægyptian* Priest, drawne from out their monuments, witnessing the antiquitie of that Nation, infinite; and comprehending the birth and progresse of [other] countries to the life. *Cicero* and *Diodorus* said in their daies, that the Chaldeans kept a register of foure hundred thousand and odde yeares. *Aristotle*, *Plinie*, and others, that *Zoroastres* lived sixe thousand yeares before *Plato*. And *Plato* saith, that those of the citty of *Sais*, have memories in writing of eight thousand yeares, and that the towne of *Athens*, was built a thousand yeares before the citty of *Sais*. *Epicurus*, that at one same time, all things that are, looke how we see them, they are all alike, and in the same fashion, in divers other Worlds, which he would have spoken more confidently, had he seene the similitudes and

## THE SECOND BOOKE

correspondencies of this new-found world of the West Indiaes, with ours, both present and past, by so many strange examples. Truly, when I consider what hath followed our learning by the course of this terrestriall policie, I have divers times wondered at my selfe, to see in so great a distance of times and places, the simpathy or jumping of so great a number of popular and wilde opinions, and of extravagant customes and beliefes, and which by no meanes seeme to hold with our naturall discourse. Mans spirit is a wonderfull worker of miracles. But this relation hath yet a kind of I wot not what more Heteroclite: which is found both in names, and in a thousand other things. For there were found Nations, which (as far as we know) had never heard of us, where circumcision was held in request; where great states and common wealths were maintained onely by women, and no men: Where our fasts and Lent was represented, adding therunto the abstinence from women; where our crosses were severall waies in great esteeme; In some places they adorned and honored their sepulchres with them, and elsewhere, especially that of Saint *Andrew*, they employed to shield themselves from nightly visions, and to lay them upon childrens couches, as good against enchantments and witchcrafts: In another place, they found one made of wood, of an exceeding height, worshipped for the God of raine: which was thrust very deepe into the ground: There was found a very expresse and lively image of our Penitentiaries: the use of Miters, the Priestes single life; the Art of Divination by the entrailes of sacrificed beasts; the abstinence from all sorts of flesh and fish, for their food; the order amongst Priests in saying of their divine service, to use, a not vulgar, but a particular tongue; and this erronious and fond concept, that the first God was expelled his throne by a younger brother of his:

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

That they were at first created with all commodities, which afterward by reason of their sinnes were abridged them: That their territory hath beene changed; that their naturall condition hath beene much impaired: That they have heretofore beene drowned by the inundation of Waters come from heaven; that none were saved but a few families, which cast themselves into the cracks or hollow of high Mountaines, which crackes they stopped very close, so that the Waters could not enter in, having before shut therein many kinds of beasts: That when they perceived the Raine to cease, and Waters to fall, they first sent out certaine doggs which returned cleane-washt, and wet, they judged that the waters were not yet much falne; and that afterward sending out some other, which seeing to returne all muddy and foule, they issued forth of the mountaines, to repeople the world againe, which they found replenished onely with Serpents. There were places found, where they used the perswasion of the day of judgement, so that they grew wondrous wroth and offended with the Spaniards, who in digging and searching of riches in their graves, scattered here and there the bones of their deceased friends; saying, that those dispersed bones could very hardly be reconjoyned together againe. They also found where they used traffick by exchange, and no otherwise; and had Faires and Markets for that purpose: They found dwarfes, and such other deformed creatures, used for the ornament of Princes tables: They found the use of hawking and fowling according to the Nature of their birdes: tyrannicall subsidies, and grievances upon subjects; delicate and pleasant gardens; dancing, tumbling; leaping and juggling, musike of instruments, armories, dicing-houses, tennis-courts, and casting lottes, or mumne-chaunce, wherein they are often so earnest and moody, that



## THE SECOND BOOKE

they will play themselves and their liberty: using no other physicke but by charmes: the manner of writing by figures: beleaving in one first man, universall father of all people: The adoration of one God, who heretofore lived man, in perfect Virginitie, fasting, and pennance, preaching the law of Nature, and the ceremonies of religion; and who vanished out of the world, without any naturall death: The opinion of Giants; the use of drunkennesse, with their manner of drinckes and drinking and pledging of healths; religious ornaments, painted over with bones and dead mens sculs; surplices, holy-Water, and holy-Water sprinckles, Women and servants, which strivingly present themselves, to be burned or entered with their deceased husbands or masters: a law that the eldest or first borne child shall succeed and inherit all; where nothing is reserved for Punies, but obedience: a custome to the promotion of certaine officers of great authority, and where he that is promoted takes upon him a new name, and quiteth his owne: Where they use to cast lime upon the knees of new borne children, saying unto him; from dust thou camest and to dust thou shalt returne againe: the Arts of Augures or prediction. These vaine shadowes of our religion, which are seene in some of these examples, witnesse the dignity and divinity thereof. It hath not onely in some sort insinuated it selfe among all the infidell Nations, on this side by some imitations, but amongst those barbarous Nations beyond, as it were by a common and supernaturall inspiration: For amongst them was also found the beliefe of Purgatory, but after a new forme: For, what we ascribe unto fire, they impute unto cold, and imagine that soules are both purged and punished by the vigor of an extreame coldnesse. This example putteth me in mind of another pleasant diversity: For, as there were some people found, who

CHAPTE  
XII

An Apolo  
of Raymo  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

tooke pleasure to unhood the end of their yard, and to cut off the fore-skinne, after the manner of the Mahometans and Jewes, some there were found, that made so great a conscience to unhood it, that with little strings, they caried their fore-skin very carefully out-streched and fastened above, for feare that end should see the aire. And of this other diversity also, that as we honour our Kings, and celebrate our Holy-daies with decking and trimming our selves with the best habilliments we have; in some regions there, to shew all disparity and submission to their King, their subjects present themselves unto him in their basest and meanest apparrell; and entring into his pallace, they take some old torne garment and put it over their other attire, to the end all the glory and ornament may shine in their Sovereigne and Maister.

But let us goe on: if Nature enclose within the limits of her ordinary progresse, as all other things, so the beliefes, the judgments and the opinions of men; if they have their revolutions, their seasons, their birth, and their death, even as Cabiches: If heaven doth move, agitate and rowle them at his pleasure, what powerfull and permanent authority doe we ascribe unto them? If by uncontroled experience we palpably touch, that the forme of our being depends of the aire, of the climate, and of the soile, wherein we are borne, and not onely the hew, the stature, the complexion and the countenance, but also the soules faculties: *Et plaga cæli non solum ad robur corporum, sed etiam animorum facit.* The climate helpeth not onely for strength of body, but of minds, saith *Vegetius*: And that the Goddesse foundresse of the Citie of *Athens*, chose a temperature of a country to situate it in, that might make the men wise, as the *Ægyptian* Priests taught *Solon*: *Athenis tenue cælum: ex quo etiam acutiores putantur*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Attici: crassum Thebis: itaque pingues Thebani, et valentes (Cic. de Fato): About Athens is a thin aire, wherby those Country-men are esteemed the sharper witted: About Thebes the aire is grosse, and therefore the Thebans were grosse and strong of constitution.* In such manner that as fruits and beasts doe spring up diverse and different; So men are borne, either more or lesse warlike, martiall, just, temperate and docile: here subject to wine, there to theft, and whoredome; here inclined to superstition, addicted to mis-believing, here given to liberty, there to servitude; capable of some one art or science; grosse-witted or ingenious: either obedient or rebellious; good or bad, according as the inclination of the place beareth, where they are seated; and being removed from one soile to another (as plants are) they take a new complexion: which was the cause, that *Cirus* would never permit the Persians to leave their barren, rough and craggie Country, for to transport themselves into another, more gentle, more fertile, and more plaine: saying, *that fat and delicious countries, make men wanton and effeminate; and fertile soiles yeeld infertile spirits.* If sometime wee see one art to flourish, or a beliefe, and sometimes another, by some heavenly influence; some ages to produce this or that nature, and so to encline mankind to this or that biase: mens spirits one while flourishing, another while barren, even as fields are seene to be; what become of all those goodly prerogatives, wherewith we still flatter our selves? *Since a wise man may mistake himselfe; yea many men, and whole nations; and as wee say, mans nature either in one thing or other, hath for many ages together mistaken her selfe.* What assurance have we that at any time she leaveth her mistaking, and that she continueth not even at this day, in her error? Me thinkes amongst other testimonies of our

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

imbecilities, this one ought not to be forgotten, that by wishing it selfe, man cannot yet finde out what he wanteth; that not by enjoying or possession, but by imagination and full wishing, we cannot all agree in one, that we most stand in need of, and would best content us. Let our imagination have free liberty to cut out and sew at her pleasure, she cannot so much as desire what is fittest to please and content her.

—*quid enim ratione timemus*

*Aut cupimus? quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te  
Conatus non poeniteat, votique peracti?*—JUVEN. Sat. x. 4.

By reason what doe we feare, or desire?  
With such dexteritie what doest aspire,  
But thou eftsoones repentest it,  
Though thy attempt and vow doe hit?

That is the reason why *Socrates*, never requested the gods to give him any thing, but what they knew to be good for him. And the publike and private prayer of the Lacedemonians, did meerely implicate, that good and faire things might be granted them, remitting the election and choise of them to the discretion of the highest power.

*Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris, at illi  
Notum qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor.*

—*Ibid.* 352.

We wish a wife, wives breeding: we would know,  
What children; shall our wife be sheep or shrow.

And the Christian beseecheth God, that his will may be done, least he should fall into that inconvenience, which Poets faine of King *Midas*: who requested of the Gods, that whatsoever he toucht, might be converted into gold: his praier was heard, his wine was gold, his bread gold, the feathers of his bed, his shirt, and his garments were turned into gold, so that he found himselfe overwhelmed in the

## THE SECOND BOOKE

injoying of his desire, and being enrich't with an  
intolerable commoditie, he must now unpray his  
prayers :

*Attonitus novitate mali, divesque miserque,  
Effugere optat opes, et quæ modo voverat, odit.*  
—OVID, *Met.* xi. 128.

Wretched and rich, amaz'd at so strange ill,  
His riches he would flie, hates his owne will.

CHAPTER  
XII  
—  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Let me speake of my selfe ; being yet very yong, I besought fortune above all things, that she would make me a knight of the order of Saint *Michael*, which in those daies was very rare, and the highest tipe of honour the French Nobilitie aymed at : she very kindly granted my request ; I had it ; In lieu of raising and advancing me from my place for the attaining of it, she hath much more graciously entreated me, she hath debased and depressed it, even unto my shoulders and under. *Cleobis* and *Biton*, *Trophonius* and *Agamedes*, the two first having besought the Goddesse, the two latter their God, of some recompence worthy their pietie, received death for a reward : So much are heavenly opinions different from ours, concerning what we have need of. God might grant us riches, honours, long life and health, but many times to our owne hurt : For, *whatsoever is pleasing to us, is not alwaies healthfull for us* ; If in lieu of former health, he send us death, or some worse sicknesse : *Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt* (*Psalm* xxiii. 4) : *The rod and thy staffe hath comforted me.* He doth it by the reasons of his providence, which more certainly considereth and regardeth what is meet for us, then we our selves can doe, and we ought to take it in good part, as from a most wise and thrice-friendly-hand.

—*si consilium vis,*  
*Permites ipsis expendere numinibus, quid*  
*Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris :*  
*Charior est illis homo quam sibi.*—JUVEN. *Sat.* x. 346.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

If you will counsell have, give the Gods leave  
To weigh, what is most meet we should receive,  
And what for our estate most profit were :  
To them, then to himselfe man is more deare.

For, to crave honours and charges of them, is to request them to cast you in some battle, or play at hazard, or some such thing, whereof the event is unknownen to you, and the fruit uncertaine. There is no combate amongst Philosophers so violent and sharpe, as that which ariseth upon the question of mans chiefe felicitie: from which (according to *Varroes* calculation) arose two hundred and foure score Sects. *Qui autem de summo bono dissentit, de tota Philosophiæ ratione disputat.* But he that disagrees about the chiefest felicitie, calls in question the whole course of *Philosophie*.

*Tres mihi convivæ propè dissentire videntur,  
Poscentes vario multum diversa palato.  
Quid dem ? quid non dem ? renuis tu quod jubet alter :  
Quod petis, id sanè est invisum acidumque duobus.*

—HOR. ii. *Epist.* ii. 61.

Three guests of mine doe seeme almost at ods to fall,  
Whilest they with divers taste for divers things doe call :  
What should I give ? What not ? You will not, what he will :  
What you would, to them twaine is hatefull, sowre and ill.

Nature should thus answer their contestations, and debates. Some say, our felicitie consisteth, and is in Vertue: Others in voluptuousnesse: Others in yeelding unto Nature: Some others in learning: others in feeling no manner of paine or sorrow: Others for a man never to suffer himselfe to be caried away by apparances: and to this opinion seemeth this other of ancient *Pithagoras* to incline,

*Nil admirari, propè res est una, Numici,  
Solâque, quæ possit facere et servare beatum.*

—i. *Epist.* vi. 1.

Sir, nothing to admire, is th' only thing,  
That may keepe happy, and to happy bring.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

which is the end and scope of the Pyrrhonian Sect. *Aristotle* ascribeth unto magnanimitie, to admire and wonder at nothing. And *Archesilaus* said, that sufferance, and an upright and inflexible state of judgement, were true felicities; whereas consents and applications, were vices and evils. True it is, that where he establisheth it for a certaine Axiome, he started from Pyrrhonisme. When the Pyrrhonians say, that *ataraxy* is the chiefe felicitie, which is the immobilitie of judgement, their meaning is not to speake it affirmatively, but the very wavering of their mind, which makes them to shun downefalls, and to shrowd themselves under the shelter of calmenesse, presents this phantasie unto them, and makes them refuse another. Oh how much doe I desire, that whilst I live, either some other learned men, or *Justus Lipsius*, the most sufficient and learned man now living; of a most polished and judicious wit, true Cosin-germane to my *Turnebus*, had both will, health and leasure enough, sincerely and exactly, according to their divisions and formes, to collect into one volume or register, as much as by us might be seene, the opinions of ancient Philosophy, concerning the subject of our being and customes, their controversies, the credit, and partaking of factions and sides, the application of the Authors and Sectators lives, to their precepts, in memorable and exemplarie accidents. O what a worthy and profitable labor would it be! Besides, if it be from our selves, that we draw the regiment of our customes, into what a bottomles confusion doe we cast our selves? For, what our reason perswades us to be most likly for it, is generally for every man to obey the lawes of his country, as is the advise of *Socrates*, inspired (saith he) by a divine perswasion. And what else meaneth she thereby, but only that our devoire or duty hath no other rule, but casuall? *Truth ought to have a*

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*like and universall visage throughout the world.* Law and justice, if man knew any, that had a body and true essence, he would not fasten it to the condition of this or that countries customes. It is not according to the Persians or Indians fantazie, that vertue should take her forme. Nothing is more subject unto a continuall agitation, then the lawes. I have since I was borne, seene those of our neighbours the English-men changed or rechanged three or foure times, not only in politike subjects, which is that some will dispense of constancy, but in the most important subject, that possibly can be, that is to say, in religion; whereof I am so much the more both grieved and ashamed, because it is a nation, with which my countriemen have heretofore had so inward and familiar acquaintance, that even to this day, there remaine in my house some ancient monuments of our former aliance. Nay I have seene amongst our selves some things become lawfull, which erst were deemed capitall: and we that hold some others, are likewise in possibilitie, according to the uncertainty of warring fortune, one day or other, to be offenders against the Majestie both of God and man, if our justice chance to fall under the mercy of [injustice]; and in the space of few yeares possession, taking a contrary essence. How could that ancient God more evidently accuse, in humane knowledge, the ignorance of divine essence, and teach men that their religion was but a peece of their owne invention, fit to combine their societie, then in declaring (as he did) to those which sought the instruction of it, by his sacred Tripos, that the true worshipping of God, was that, which he found to be observed by the custome of the place, where he lived? Oh God, what bond, or duetie is it, that we owe not to our Sovereigne Creators benignitie, in that he hath beene pleased to cleare and enfranchise



## THE SECOND BOOKE

our beliefe from those vagabonding and arbitrary devotions, and fixt it upon the eternall Base of his holy word? What will Philosophie then say to us in this necessity? that we follow the lawes of our country, that is to say, this waveing sea of a peoples or of a Princes opinions, which shall paint me forth justice with as many colours, and reforme the same into as many visages as there are changes and alterations of passions in them. I cannot have my judgement so flexible. What goodnesse is that, which but yesterday I saw in credit and esteeme, and to morrow, to have lost all reputation, and that the crossing of a River, is made a crime? What truth is that, which these Mountaines bound, and is a lie in the World beyond them? But they are pleasant, when to allow the Lawes some certaintie, they say, that there be some firme, perpetuall and immoveable, which they call naturall, and by the condition of their proper essence, are imprinted in man-kind: of which some make three in number, some foure, some more, some lesse: an evident token, that it is a marke as doubtfull as the rest. Now are they so unfortunate (for, how can I terme that but misfortune, that of so infinite a number of lawes, there is not so much as one to be found, which the fortune or temeritie of chance hath graunted to be universally received, and by the consent of unanimities of all Nations to be admitted?) they are (I say) so miserable, that of these three or foure choise-selected lawes, there is not one alone, that is not impugned or disallowed, not by one nation, but by many. Now is the generalitie of approbation, the onely likely ensigne, by which they may argue some lawes to naturall: For, what nature had indeed ordained us, that should we doubtlesse follow with one common consent; and not one onely nation, but every man in particular, should have a feeling of the force and

CHAPTE  
XII  
An Apologi  
of Raymon  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

violence, which he should urge him with, that would incite him to contrarie and resist that law. Let them all (for examples sake) shew me but one of this condition. *Protagoras* and *Ariston* gave the justice of the lawes no other essence, but the authoritie and opinion of the law-giver, and that excepted, both Good and Honest lost their qualities, and remained but vaine and idle names, of indifferent things. *Thrasymachus* in *Plato*, thinkes there is no other right, but the commoditie of the superiour. There is nothing wherein the world differeth so much, as in customes and lawes. Some things are here accompted abominable, which in another place are esteemed commendable: as in *Lacedemonia*, the slight and subtlety in stealing. Mariages in proximity of blood are amongst us forbidden as capitall, elsewhere they are allowed and esteemed;

—*gentes esse feruntur,  
In quibus et nato genitrix, et nata parenti  
Jungitur, et pietas geminato crescit amore.*

—OVID, *Metam.* x. 331.

There are some people, where the mother weddeth  
Her sonne, the daughter her owne father beddeth,  
And so by doubling love, their kindnesse spreddeth.

The murthering of children and of parents; the communication with women; traffick of robbing and stealing; free licence to all manner of sensuality: to conclude, there is nothing so extreame and horrible, but is found to be received and allowed by the custome of some nation. It is credible that there be naturall lawes; as may be seene in other creatures, but in us they are lost: this goodly humane reason engrafting it selfe among all men, to sway and command, confounding and topsi-turving the visage of all things, according to her inconstant vanitie and vaine inconstancy. *Nihil itaque amplius nostrum est,*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*quod nostrum dico, artis est.* Therefore nothing more is ours: all that I call ours, belongs to Art. Subjects have divers lustres, and severall considerations, whence the diversity of opinions is chiefly engendred. One nation vieweth a subject with one visage, and thereon it staies; an other with an other. Nothing can be imagined so horrible, as for one to eate and devoure his owne father. Those people, which anciently kept this custome, hold it neverthelesse for a testimonie of pietie and good affection: seeking by that meane to give their fathers the worthiest and most honorable sepulchre, harboring their fathers bodies and reliques in themselves and in their marrow; in some sort reviving and regenerating them by the transmutation made in their quicke flesh, by digestion and nourishment. It is easie to be considered what abomination and cruelty it had beene, in men accustomed and trained in this inhumane superstition, to cast the carcases of their parents into the corruption of the earth, as food for beasts and wormes. *Licurgus* wisely considereth in theft, the vivacitie, diligence, courage, and nimblenesse, that is required in surprising or taking any thing from ones neighbour, and the commoditie which thereby redoundeth to the common-wealth, that every man heedeth more curiously the keeping of that which is his owne: and judged, that by this twofold institution to assaile and to defend, much good was drawne for military discipline (which was the principall Science and chiefe vertue, wherein he would enable that nation) of greater respect and more consideration, then was the disorder and injustice of prevailing and taking other mens goods. *Dionysius* the tyrant offered *Plato* a robe made after the Persian fashion, long, damasked and perfumed: But he refused the same, saying, *that being borne a man he would not willingly put-on a womans garment*: But *Aristippus* tooke it, with this

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

answere, that no garment could corrupt a chaste minde. His Friends reproved his demisnesse, in being so little offended, that *Dionysius* had spitten in his face. Tut (said he) *Fishers suffer themselves to be washed over head and eares, to get a gudgeon. Diogenes* washing of coleworts for his dinner, seeing him passe by, said unto him, *If thou couldest live with coleworts, thou wouldest not court and faune upon a tyrant*; to whom *Aristippus* replied; *If thou couldest live among men, thou wouldest not wash coleworts.* See here how reason yeeldeth apparance to divers effects. It is a pitcher with two eares, which a man may take hold on, either by the right or left hand.

—bellum ô terra hospita portas,  
Bello armantur equi, bellum hæc armenta minantur :  
Sed tamen üdem olim curru succedere sucti  
Quadrupes, et fræna jugo concordia ferre,  
Spes est pacis— —VIRG. *Æn.* iii. 559.

O stranger-harb'ring land, thou bringst us warre;  
Steeds serve for warre;  
These heards doe threaten jarre.  
Yet horses erst were wont to draw our waines,  
And harness matches beare agreeing raines,  
Hope is hereby that wee,  
In peace shall well agree.

*Solon* being importuned not to shed vaine and bootles teares for the death of his sonne; *That's the reason* (answered hee) *I may more justly shed them, because they are bootlesse and vaine.* *Socrates* his wife, exasperated her griefe by this circumstance; *Good Lord* (said she) *how unjustly doe these bad judges put him to death!* What? *Wouldest thou rather they should execute me justly?* replide he to her. It is a fashion amongst us to have holes bored in our eares: the Greekes held it for a badge of bondage. We hide our selves when we will enjoy our wives: The Indians doe it in open view of all



## THE SECOND BOOKE

men. The Scithians were wont to sacrifice strangers in their Temples, whereas in other places Churches are Sanctuaries for them.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Inde furor vulgi, quod numina vicinorum  
Odit quisque locus, cum solos credat habendos  
Esse Deos quos ipse colit—* —JUVE, *Sat.* xv. 36.

The vulgar hereupon doth rage, because  
Each place doth hate their neighbours soveraigne lawes,  
And onely Gods doth deeme,  
Those Gods, themselves esteeme.

I have heard it reported of a Judge, who when he met with any sharp conflict betweene *Bartolus* and *Baldus*, or with any case admitting contrarietie, was wont to write in the margin of his book, *A question for a friend*, which is to say, that the truth was so entangled, and disputable, that in such a case he might favour which party he should think good. There was no want but of spirit and sufficiency, if he set not every where through his books, *A Question for a friend*. The Advocates and Judges of our time find in all cases byases too-too-many, to fit them where they think good. To so infinite a science, depending on the authority of so many opinions, and of so arbitrary a subject, it cannot be, but that an exceeding confusion of judgements must arise. There are very few processes so cleare, but the Lawiers advises upon them will be found to differ: What one company hath judged, another will adjudge the contrary, and the very same will another time change opinion. Whereof we see ordinarie examples by this licence, which wonderfully blemisheth the authoritie and lustre of our law, never to stay upon one sentence, but to run from one to another Judge, to decide one same case. Touching the libertie of Philosophicall opinions, concerning vice and vertue, it is a thing needing no great

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

extension, and wherein are found many advises, which were better unspoken, then published to weake capacities. *Arcesilaus* was wont to say, that in pailiardize, it was not worthy consideration, where, on what side, and how it was done. *Et obscænas voluptates, si natura requirit, non genere, aut loco, aut ordine, sed forma, ætate, figura metiendas Epicurus putat. Ne amores quidem sanctos à sapiente alienos esse arbitrantur. Quæramus ad quam usque ætatem juvenes amandi sint. Obscene pleasures, if nature require them, the Epicure esteemeth not to be measured by kind, place, or order; but by forme, age, and fashion. Nor doth he thinke that holy loves should be strange from a wiseman. Let us then question to what yeares yong folke may be beloved. These two last Stoicke-places, and upon this purpose, the reproch of Diogarchus to Plato himselfe, shew how many excessive licenses, and out of common use, soundest Philosophy doth tolerate. Lawes take their authoritie from possession and custome: It is dangerous to reduce them to their beginning: In rowling on, they swell, and grow greater and greater, as doe our rivers: follow them upward, unto their source, and you shall find them but a bubble of water, searse to be discerned, which in gliding on swelleth so proud, and gathers so much strength. Behold the ancient considerations, which have given the first motion to this famous torrent, so full of dignitie, of honour and reverence, you shall find them so light and weake, that these men which will weigh all, and complaine of reason, and who receive nothing upon trust and authoritie, it is no wonder if their judgements are often far-distant from common judgement. Men that take Natures first image for a patterne, it is no marvaile, if in most of their opinions, they misse the common-beaten path. As for example; few amongst them would have*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

approved the forced conditions of our mariages and most of them would have had women in community, and without any private respect. They refused our ceremonies: *Chrysippus* said, that some Philosophers would in open view of all men shew a dozen of tumbling-tricks, yea, without any slops or breeches, for a dozen of olives. He would hardly have perswaded *Calisthenes* to refuse his faire daughter *Agarista* to *Hippocles*, because he had seene him graft the forked tree in her upon a table, *Metrocles* somewhat indiscreetly, as he was disputing in his Schole, in presence of his Auditorie let a fart, for shame whereof he afterwards kept his house, and could not be drawen abroad, untill such time as *Crates* went to visit him, who to his perswasions and reasons, adding the example of his liberty, began to fart a vie with him, and to remove this scruple from off his conscience; and moreover won him to his Stoicall (the more free) Sect, from the Peripateticall (and more civill) one, which [unto that time] he had followed. That which we call civility, not to dare to doe that openly, which amongst us is both lawfull and honest, being done in secret, they termed folly: And to play the wilie Foxe, in concealing and disclaiming what nature, custome, and our desire publish and proclame of our actions, they deemed to be a vice. And thought it a suppressing of *Venus* her mysteries, to remove them from out the private vestry of her temple, and expose them to the open view of the people, And that to draw her sports from out the curtines was to loose them. *Shame is matter of some consequence. Concealing, reservation, and circumspection, are parts of estimation.* That, sensuality under the maske of Vertu did very ingeniously procure not to be prostituted in the midst of high-waies, not trodden upon, and seen by the common sort; alledging the dignity and com-

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apology  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

modity of her wonted Cabinets. Wherupon some say, that to forbid and remove the common brothel-houses, is not only to spread whoredome every where, which only was allotted to those places, but also to incite idle and vagabond men to that vice, by reason of the difficultie.

*Mæchus es Ausidius qui vir Corvine fuisti,  
Rivalis fuerat qui tuus, ille vir est.  
Cur aliena placet tibi, quæ tua non placet uxor?  
Nunquid securus non potes arrigere?*

—MART. iii. Epig. lxx.

This experience is diversified by a thousand examples.

*Nullus in urbe fuit tota, qui tangere vellet  
Uxorem gratis Cæciliane tuam,  
Dum licuit: sed nunc positis custodibus, ingens  
Turba futulorum est. Ingeniosus homo es.*

—i. Epig. lxxiv.

A Philosopher being taken with the deed, was demaunded, what he did: answered very mildly, *I plant man*, blushing no more being found so napping, then if he had bin taken setting of Garlike. It is (as I suppose) of a tender and respective opinion, that a notable and religious Author, holds this action so necessarily-bound to secrecy and shame, that in Cynike embracements and dalliances, he could not be perswaded that the worke should come to her end; but rather, that it lingred and staid, only to represent wanton gestures, and lascivious motions, to maintaine the impudency of their schooles-profession: and that to powre forth what shame had forced and bashfullnesse restrained, they had also afterward need to seeke some secret place. He had not seene far-enough into their licenciousnesse: For, *Diogenes* in sight of all, exercising his Masturbation, bred a longing desire, in the by-standers, that in such sort they

## THE SECOND BOOKE

might fill their bellies by rubbing or clawing the same. To those that asked him, why he sought for no fitter place to feed in, then in the open frequented high-way, he made answer, *It is because I am hungry in the open frequented high-way.* The Philosophers Women, which medled with their Sects, did likewise in all places, and without any discretion meddle with their bodies: And *Crates* had never received *Hipparchia* into his fellowship, but upon condition, to follow all the customes and fashions of his order. These Philosophers set an extreme rate on vertue; and rejected al other disciplins, except the morall; hence is it, that in all actions, they ascribed the Sovereigne authority to the election of their wise, yea, and above al lawes: and appointed no other restraint unto voluptuousnes, but the moderation, and preservation of others liberty. *Heraclitus* and *Protagoras*, forsomuch as wine seemeth bitter unto the sick, and pleasing to the healthy; and an Oare crooked in the water, and straight to them that see it above water, and such-like contrary apparances, which are found in some subjects; argued that all subjects had the causes of these apparances in them, and that there was som kind of bitterness in the wine, which had a reference unto the sickmans tast; in the Oare a certain crooked quality, having relation to him that seeth it in the water. And so of all things else. Which implieth, that all is in all things, and by consequence nothing in any: for either nothing is, or all is. This opinion put me in mind of the experience we have, that there is not any one sense or visage, either straight or crooked, bitter or sweet, but mans wit shall find in the writings, which he undertaketh to runne-over. In the purest, most unspotted, and most absolutely-perfect-word, that possibly can be, how many errors, falshoods, and lies have beene made to proceede from-it? What heresie

CHAP  
X  
—  
An Ap  
of Ray  
Sebon



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

hath not found testimonies and ground sufficient, both to undertake and to maintaine it selfe? It is therefore, that the Authors of such errors will never goe from this prooffe of the Testimony of words interpretation. A man of worth, going about by authority to approve the search of the Philosophers stoïe, (wherein he was overwhelmed) alleadged at least five or six severall passages out of the holy bible unto me, upon which (he said) he had at first grounded himselfe, for the discharge of his conscience (for he is a man of the Ecclesiasticall profession) and truly the invention of them, was not only pleasant, but also very fitly applied to the defence of this goodly and mind-inchanting science. This way is the credit of divining fables attained to. There is no prognosticator, if he have but this authority, that any one wil but vouchsafe to read him over, and curiously to search al the infoldings and lustres of his words, but a man shall make him say what he pleaseth, as the Sibils. There are so many meanes of interpretation, that it is hard, be it flat-long, side-long, or edge-long, but an ingenious and pregnant wit, shal in all subjects meet with some aire that wil fit his turn. Therefore is a clowdy, darke, and ambiguous stile found in so frequent and ancient custome. That the Author may gaine, to draw, allure, and busie posterity to himselfe, which not only the sufficiency, but the casuall favour of the matter, may gaine as much or more. As for other matters, let him, be it either through foolishnes or subtilty, shew himself somewhat obscure and divers, it is no matter, care not he for that. A number of spirits sifting, and tossing him-over, will find and expresse sundry formes, either according, or collaterally, or contrary to his owne, all which shall do him credit. He shall see himselfe enriched by the meanes of his Disciples, as the Grammer Schoole Maisters. It is that,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

which hath made many things of nothing, to passe  
 ry curreant, that hath brought divers books in  
 edit, and charged with all sorts of matter, that any  
 th but desired: one selfesame thing, admitting a  
 ousand and a thousand, and as many severall  
 ages, and divers considerations, as it best pleaseth us,  
 it possible, that ever *Homer* meant all that, which  
 me make him to have meant: And that he pros-  
 tited himselfe to so many, and so severall shapes,  
 Divines, Lawiers, Captaines, Philosophers and all  
 t of people else, which, how diversly and contrary  
 ever it be they treat of sciences, do notwithstanding  
 oly rely upon him, and refer themselves unto him;  
 a Generall Maister for all offices, workes, sciences,  
 d tradsmen and an universall counsellor in all  
 terprises? whosoever hath had need of Oracles or  
 edictions, and would apply them to himselfe, hath  
 ind them in him for his purpose. A notable man,  
 d a good friend of mine, would make one marvel  
 heare what strange far-fetcht conceits, and admir-  
 le affinities, in favor of our religion, he maketh to  
 rive from him; And can hardly be drawne from  
 s opinion, but that such was *Homers* intent and  
 aning (yet is *Homer* so familiar unto him, as I  
 nke no man of our age is better acquainted with  
 n). And what he finds in favour of our religion,  
 ny ancient learned men, have found in favour of  
 sirs. See how *Plato* is tossed and turned over,  
 ry man endeavoring to apply him to his purpose,  
 eth him what construction he list. He is wrested  
 d inserted to all new-fangled opinions, that the  
 rld receiveth or alloweth of, and according to the  
 ferent course of subjects is made to be repugnant  
 o himselfe. Every one according to his sense  
 kes him to disavow the customes that were lawfull  
 is daies, in asmuch as they are unlawfull in these  
 es. All which is very lively and strongly main-

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
 of Raymond  
 Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

tained, according as the wit and learning of the interpreter is strong and quicke. Upon the ground which *Heraclitus* had, and that sentence of his; that *all things had those shapes in them, which men found in them.* And *Democritus* out of the very same drew a clean contrarie conclusion, *id est*, that *subjects had nothing at all in them of that which we found in them;* And forasmuch as honny was sweet to one man, and bitter to another, he argued that honny was neither sweet nor bitter. The *Pyrrhonians* would say, they know not whether it be sweet or bitter, or both, or neither: for, they ever gain the highest point of doubting. The *Cyrenaicks* held, that nothing was perceptible outwardly, and only that was perceivable, which by the inward touch or feeling, touched or concerned us, as grieve and sensuality, distinguishing neither tune, nor collours, but onely certaine affections, that came to us of them; and that man had no other seate of his judgement. *Protagoras* deemed, that to be true to all men, which to all men seemeth so. The *Epicurians* place all judgement in the senses, and in the notice of things, and in voluptuousnesse. *Platoes* mind was, that the judgment of truth, and truth it selfe drawne from opinions and senses, belonged to the spirit, and to cogitation. This discourse hath drawne me to the consideration of the senses, wherein consisteth the greatest foundation and triall of our ignorance. Whatsoever is knowne, is without peradventure knowne by the faculty of the knower: For, since the judgement commeth from the operation of him that judgeth, reason requireth, that he performe and act this operation by his meanes and will, and not by others compulsion: as it would follow if wee knew things by the force, and according to the law of their essence. Now all knowledge is addressed unto us by the senses, they are our maisters:

# THE SECOND BOOKE

—*via qua munita fidei*  
*Proxima fert humanum in pectus, templaque mentis.*  
—*Lucret. v. 102.*

Whereby a way for credit lead's well-linde  
Into mans breast and temple of his minde.

## CHAPTER XII

—  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

Science begins by them and in them is resolved.  
After all, we should know no more then a stone,  
unlesse we know, that here is, sound, smell, light,  
savor, measure, weight, softnesse, hardnesse, sharp-  
nesse, colour, smoothnesse, breadth and depth. Behold  
here the platforme of all the frame, and principles of  
the building of all our knowledge. And according to  
some, science is nothing else, but what is knowne by  
the senses. Whosoever can force me to contradict  
my senses, hath me fast by the throate, and cannot  
make me recoyle one foote backward. The senses  
are the beginning and end of humane knowledge.

*Invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam*  
*Notitiam veri, neque sensus posse refelli,*  
*Quid majore fide porro quam sensus haberi*  
*Debet ?—* —iv. 480, 484.

You shall finde knowledge of the truth at first was  
bred  
From our first senses, nor can senses be misse-led.  
What, then our senses, should  
With us more credit hold ?

Attribute as little as may be unto them, yet  
must this ever be graunted them, that all our in-  
struction is addressed by their meanes and intermis-  
sion. *Cicero* saith, that *Chrysippus* having assaid to  
abate the power of his senses, and of their vertue,  
presented contrary arguments unto himselfe, and  
so vehement oppositions, that he could not satisfie  
himselfe. Wherupon *Carneades* (who defended the  
contrary part) boasted, that he used the very same  
weapons and words of *Chrysippus* to combate against  
him ; and therefore cried out upon him, *Oh miserable*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*man! thine owne strength hath foiled thee.* There is no greater absurditie in our judgment, then to maintaine, that fire heateth not, that light shineth not, that in iron there is neither weight nor firmenesse, which are notices our senses bring unto us: Nor beliefe or science in man, that may be compared unto that, in certaintie. The first consideration I have upon the senses subject, is, that I make a question, whether man be provided of all naturall senses, or no. I see divers creatures, that live an entire and perfect life, some without sight, and some without hearing; who knoweth whether we also want either one, two, three, or many senses more: For, if we want any one, our discourse cannot discover the want or defect thereof. It is the senses priviledge, to be the extreame bounds of our perceiving. There is nothing beyond them, that may stead us to discover them: No one sense can discover another.

*An poterunt oculos aures reprehendere, an aures  
Tactus, an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris,  
An confutabunt nares, oculive revincant?*

—488.

Can eares the eyes, or can touch reprehend  
The eares, or shall mouthes-taste that touch amend?  
Shall our nose it confute,  
Or eyes gainst it dispute?

They all make the extreamest line of our facultie.

*—seorsum cuique potestas  
Divisa est, sua vis cuique est—*

—491.

To teach distinctly might  
Is shar'de; each hath its right.

It is impossible to make a man naturally blind, to conceive that he seeth not; impossible to make him desire to see, and sorrow his defect. Therefore ought we not to take assurance, that our mind is contented

## THE SECOND BOOKE

and satisfied with those we have, seeing it hath not wherewith to feel her owne malady, and perceive her imperfection, if it be in any. It is impossible to tell that blind man any thing, either by discourse, argument, or similitude, that lodgeth any apprehension of light, colour, or sight in his imagination. There is nothing more backward, that may push the senses to any evidence. The blind-borne, which we perceive desire to se, it is not to understand what they require; they have learn't of us, that something they want, and something they desire, that is in us, with the effects and consequences thereof, which they call good: Yet wot not they what it is, nor apprehend they it neere or far. I have seene a Gentleman of a good house, borne blind, at least blind in such an age, that he knowes not what sight is; he understandeth so little what he wanteth, that as we doe, he useth words fitting sight, and applieth them after a manner onely proper and peculiar to himselfe. A child being brought before him to whom he was god-father, taking him in his armes, he said, good Lord what a fine child this is! it is a goodly thing to see him: What a cherefull countenance he hath, how prettily he looketh. He will say as one of us. This hall hath a faire prospect: It is very faire weather: The Sunne shines cleare. Nay, which is more: because hunting, hawking, tennis-play, and shuting at butts are our common sports and exercises (for so he hath heard) his mind will be so affected unto them, and he wil so busie himselfe about them, that he will thinke to have as great an interest in them, as any of us, and shew himselfe as earnestly passionate, both in liking and disliking them as any else; yet doth he conceive and receive them but by hearing. If he be in a faire champion ground, where he may ride, they will tell him, yonder is a Hare started, or the Hare is killed, he is as busily earnest

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

of his game, as he heareth others to be, that have perfect sight. Give him a ball, he takes it in the left hand, and with the right strikes it away with his racket; In a piece he shutes at randome; and is well pleased with what his men tell him, be it high or wide. Who knowes whether mankind commit as great a folly, for want of some sense, and that by this default, the greater part of the visage of things be concealed from us? Who knowes whether the difficulties we find in sundry of Natures workes, proceede thence? And whether divers effects of beasts, which exceed our capacitie, are produced by the facultie of some sense, that we want? And whether some of them, have by that meane a fuller and more perfect life then ours? We seize on an apple wel nigh with all our senses; We find rednesse, smoothnesse, odor and sweetnesse in it; besides which, it may have other vertues, either drying or binding, to which we have no sense to be referred. The proprieties which in many things we call secret, as in the Adamant to draw iron, is it not likely there should be sensitive faculties in nature able to judge and perceive them, the want whereof breedeth in us the ignorance of the true essence of such things? It is happily some particular sense that unto Cockes or Chanticleares discovereth the morning and midnight houre, and moveth them to crow: That teacheth a Hen, before any use or experience, to feare a Hawke, and not a Goose or a Peacocke, farre greater birds: That warneth yong chickins of the hostile qualitie which the Cat hath against them, and not to distrust a Dog; to strut and arme themselves against the mewling of the one (in some sort a flattering and milde voice) and not against the barking of the other (a snarling and quarrelous voice:) that instructeth Rats, Wasps, and Emmets, ever to chuse the best cheese and fruit, having never tasted



## THE SECOND BOOKE

them before: And that addresseth the Stag, the Elephant, and the Serpent, to the knowledge of certaine herbs and simples, which, being either wounded or sicke, have the vertue to cure them. There is no sense but hath some great domination, and which by his meane affordeth not an infinite number of knowledges. If we were to report the intelligence of soundes, of harmony and of the voice, it would bring an [unimaginable] confusion to all the rest of our learning and science. For, besides what is tyed to the proper effect of every sense, how many arguments, consequences and conclusions draw we unto other things, by comparing one sense to another? Let a skilfull wise man but imagine humane nature to be originally produced without sight and discourse, how much ignorance and trouble such a defect would bring unto him, and what obscurity and blindness in our mind: By that shall wee perceive, how much the privation of one, or two, or three such senses, (if there be any in us) doth import us about the knowledge of truth. We have by the consultation and concurrence of our five senses formed one Verity, whereas peradventure there was required the accord and consent of eight or ten senses, and their contribution, to attaine a perspicuous insight of her, and see her in her true essence. Those Sects which combate mans science, doe principally combate the same by the uncertainty and feeblennesse of our senses: For, since by their meane and intermission all knowledge comes unto us, if they chaunce to misse in the report they make unto us, if either they corrupt or alter that, which from abroad they bring unto us, if the light which by them is transported into our soule be obscured in the passage, we have nothing else to hold by. From this extreame difficultie are sprung all these phantazies, which everie subject containeth, what-

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymonde  
Sebond

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

soever we find in it: That it hath not what we suppose to find in it. And that of the Epicurians, which is, that the Sunne is no greater than our sight doth judge it,

*Quicquid id est, nihilo fertur majore figurâ,  
Quàm nostris oculis quam cernimus esse videtur.*

—LUCR. v. 576.

What'ere it be, it in no greater forme doth passe,  
Then to our eyes, which it behold, it seeming was,

that the apparances, which represent a great body, to him that is neare unto it, and a much lesser to him that is further from it, are both true;

*Nec tamen hic oculis falli concedimus hilum:  
Proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli.*

—iv. 380, 387.

Yet graunt we not, in this, our eyes deceiv'd or blind,  
Impute not then to eyes this error of the mind.

and resolutely, that there is no deceit in the senses: That a man must stand to their mercy, and elsewhere seek reasons to excuse the difference and contradiction we find in them; yea invent all other untruthes, and raving conceits (so farre come they) rather then excuse the causes. *Timagoras* swore, that howsoever he winked or turned his eyes, he could never perceive the light of the candle to double: And that this seeming proceeded from the vice of opinion, and not from the instrument. Of all absurdities, the most absurd amongst the Epicurians, is, to disavow the force and effect of the senses.

*Proinde quod in quoque est his visum tempore, verum est;  
Et si non potuit ratio dissolvere causam,  
Cur ea quæ fuerint juxtim quadrata, procul sint  
Visa rotunda; tamen præstat rationis egentem  
Reddere mendosè causus utriusque figuræ,  
Quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quocumque,*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Et violare fidem primam, et convellere tota  
Fundamenta, quibus nixatur vita salusque.  
Non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa  
Concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis,  
Præcipitesque locos vitare, et cætera quæ sint  
In genere hoc fugienda.*—LUCR. iv. 502.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

What by the eyes is scene at any time, is true,  
Though the cause Reason could not render of the view,  
Why, what was square at hand, a farre off seemed round,  
Yet it much better were, that wanting reasons ground  
The causes of both formes we harp-on, but not hit,  
Then let slip from our hands things cleare, and them omit,  
And violate our first believe, and rashly rend  
All those ground-workes, whereon both life and health  
depend,  
For not alone all reason falls, life likewise must  
Faile out of hand, unlesse your senses you dare trust,  
And breake-neckes places, and all other errors shunne,  
From which we in this kinde most carefully should runne.

This desperate and so little Philosophicall counsell, represents no other thing, but that humane science cannot be maintained but by unreasonable, fond and mad reason: yet is it better, that man use it to prevaile, yea and of all other remedies else how phantasticall soever they be, rather then avow his necessarie foolishnesse: So prejudiciall and disadvantageous a veritie he cannot avoide, but senses must necessarily be the Sovereigne maisters of his knowledge: But they are uncertaine and falsifiable to all circumstances: There must a man strike to the utmost of his power, and if his just forces faile him (as they are wont) to use and employ obstinacie, temeritie and impudencie. If that which the Epicurians affirme be true, that is to say, we have no science, if the apparances of the senses be false: and that which the Stoicks say, if it is also true that the senses apparences are so false as they can produce us no science: We will conclude at the charges of these two great Dogmatist Sects, that



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

there is no science. Touching the error and uncertainty of the senses operation, a man may store himselfe with as many examples as he pleaseth, so ordinary are the faults and deceits they use towards us. And the ecchoing or reporting of a valley, the sound of a Trumpet seemeth to sound before us, which commeth a mile behind us.

*Extantesque procul medio de gurgite montes  
Iidem apparent longe diversi licet.*—LUCR. iv. 398.  
*Et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur  
Quos agimus propter navim.*—390.

—*ubi in medio nobis equus acer obhæsit  
Flumine, equi corpus transversum ferre videtur  
Vis, et in adversum flumen contruders raptim.*—423.

And hills, which from the maine far-off to kenning stand,  
Appeare all one, though they farre distant be, at hand.  
And hilles and fields doe seeme unto our boate to flie,  
Which we drive by our boate as we doe passe thereby.  
When in midst of a streame a stately Horse doth stay,  
The streame's orethwarting seemes his body crosse to sway,  
And swiftly 'gainst the streame to thrust him th' other way.

To roule a bullet under the fore-finger, the middlemost being put over it, a man must very much enforce himselfe, to affirme there is but one, so assuredly doth our sense present us two. That the senses do often maister our discourse, and force it to receive impressions, which he knoweth and judgeth to be false, it is daily seene. I leave the sense of feeling, which hath his functions neerer, more quicke and substantiall, and which by the effect of the griefe or paine it brings to the body doth so often confound and re-enverse all these goodly Stoicall resolutions, and enforceth to cry out of the belly-ache him, who hath with all resolution established in his mind this Doctrine, that the cholike, as every other sicknesse or paine, is a thing indifferent, wanting power to abate any thing of Sovereigne good or chiefe felicity, wherein the

## THE SECOND BOOKE

wise man is placed by his owne vertue: there is no heart so demisse, but the ratling sound of a drum, or the clang of a Trumpet, will rowze and inflame; nor mind so harsh and sterne, but the sweetnesse and harmony of musicke, will move and tickle; nor any soule so skittish and stubborne, that hath not a feeling of some reverence, in considering the cloudy vastitie and gloomie canopies of our churches, the eye-pleasing diversitie of ornaments, and orderly order of our ceremonies, and hearing the devout and religious sound of our Organs, the moderate, symphonieall, and heavenly harmonie of our voices: Even those that enter into them with an obstinate will and contemning minde, have in their heart a feeling of remorse, of chillesse, and horreur, that puts them into a certaine diffidence of their former opinions. As for me, I distrust mine owne strength, to heare with a settled minde some of *Horace* or *Catullus* verses sung with a sufficiently well tuned voice, uttered by, and proceeding from a faire, yong and hart-alluring mouth. And *Zeno* had reason to say, that the voice was the flowre of beauty. Some have gone about to make me beleewe, that a man, who most of us French men know, in repeating certaine verses he had made, had imposed upon me, that they were not such in writing, as in the aire, and that mine eyes would judge of them otherwise than mine eares: so much credit hath pronounciation to give price and fashion to those workes that passe her mercy: Whereupon *Philoxenus* was not to be blamed, when hearing one to give an ill accent to some composition of his, he tooke in a rage some of his pots or bricks, and breaking them, trode and trampled them under his feet, saying unto him, *I breake and trample what is thine, even as thou manglest and marrest what is mine.* Wherefore did they, (who with an undanted resolve have procured their owne death, because they

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

would not see the blow or stroke comming) turne their face away? And those who for their healths sake cause themselves to be cut and cauterized, cannot endure the sight of the preparations, tooles, instruments and workes of the Chirurgion, but because the sight should have no part of the paine or smart? Are not these fit examples to verifie the authoritie, which senses have over discourse? We may long-enough know that such a ones lockes or flaring-tresses are borrowed of a Page, or taken from some Lacky, that this faire ruby-red came from *Spaine*, and this whitenes or smoothnes from the Ocean sea: yet must sight force us to find, and deeme the subject more lovely and more pleasing, against all reason. For, in that there is nothing of its owne,

*Auferimur cultu; gemmis, aurôque teguntur  
Crimina, pars minima est ipsa puella sui  
Sæpe ubi sit quod ames inter tam multa requiras:  
Decipit hæc oculos Ægide dives amor.*

—OVID, *Rem. Am.* i. 343.

We are misse-led by ornaments: what is amisse  
Gold and gemmes cover, least part of her selfe the  
maiden is.  
'Mongst things so many you may aske, where your  
love lies,  
Rich love by this Gorgonian shield deceives thine  
eyes.

How much doe Poets ascribe unto the vertue of the senses, which makes *Narcissus* to have even fondly lost himselfe for the love of his shadow?

*Cunctaque miratur, quibus est mirabilis ipse,  
Se cupit imprudens, et qui probat, ipse probatur,  
Dumque petit, petitur: pariterque accendit et ardet.*

—OVID, *Metam.* iii. 424.

He all admires, whereby himselfe is admirable,  
Fond he, fond of himselfe, to himselfe amiable;  
He, that doth like, is lik'd, and while he doth desire;  
He is desired, at once he burnes and sets on fire.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

and *Pigmaliions* wit's so troubled by the impression of the sight of his ivory statue, that hee loveth and serves it, as if it had life :

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Oscula dat, reddique putat, sequiturque, tenetque,  
Et credit tactis digitos insidere membris,  
Et metuit pressos veniat ne livor in artus.*—OVID, *Ib.* x. 256.

He kisses, and thinks kisses come againe,  
He sues, pursues, and holds, beleeves in vaine  
His fingers sinke where he doth touch the place,  
And feares least black and blew toucht-lims deface.

Let a Philosopher be put in a Cage made of small and thin-set iron wire, and hanged on the top of our Ladies Church steeple in *Paris* ; he shall, by evident reason, perceive that it is impossible he should fall downe out of it ; yet can he not chuse (except he have beene brought up in the trade of Tilers or Thatchers) but the sight of that exceeding height must needs dazle his sight, and amaze or turne his senses. For, we have much ado to warrant our selves in the walks or battlements of an high tower or steeple, if they be battlemented and wrought with pillers, and somewhat wide one from another, although of stone, and never so strong. Nay, some there are, that can scarcely thinke or heare of such hights. Let a beame or planke be laid acrosse from one of those two Steeples to the other, as big, as thick, as strong, and as broad, as would suffice any man to walke safely upon it, there is no Philosophicall wisdome of so great resolution and constancie, that is able to encourage and perswade us to march upon it, as we would, were it below on the ground. I have sometimes made triall of it upon our mountaines on this side of *Italie*, yet am I one of those that will not easily be affrighted with such things, and I could not without horror to my minde and trembling of leggs and thighes endure to looke on

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

those infinite precipices and steepy downe-falls, though I were not neere the brim, nor any danger within my length, and more; and unlesse I had willingly gone to the perill, I could not possibly have falne. Where I also noted, that how deep soever the bottome were, if but a tree, a shrub, or any out-butting crag of a Rock presented it selfe unto our eyes, upon those steepie and high Alpes, somewhat to uphold the sight, and divide the same, it doth somewhat ease and assure us from feare, as if it were a thing, which in our fall might either helpe or uphold us: And that we cannot without some dread and giddinesse in the head, so much as abide to looke upon one of those even and downe-right precipices: *Ut despici sine vertigine simul oculorum animique non possit. So as they can not looke downe without giddinesse both of eyes and mindes:* Which is an evident deception of the sight. Therefore was it, that a worthy Philosopher pulled out his eyes, that so he might discharge his soule of the seducing and diverting he received by them, and the better and more freely apply himselfe unto Philosophy. But by this accompt, he should also have stopped his eares, which (as *Theophrastus* said) are the most dangerous instruments we have to receive violent and sodaine impressions to trouble and alter us, and should, in the end, have deprived himselfe of all his other senses, that is to say, both of his being, and life. For, they have the power to command our discourses and sway our mind: *Fil etiam sæpe specie quadam, sæpe vocum gravitate et cantibus, ut pellantur animi vehementius: sæpe etiam curâ et timore* (Cic. *Divin. i.*). It comes to passe, that many times our minds are much moved with some shadow, many times with deep sounding, or singing of voices, many times with care and feare. Physitions hold, that there are certaine complexions, which by some sounds and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

instruments are agitated even unto furie. I have seene some, who without infringing their patience, could not well heare a bone gnawne under their table: and we see few men, but are much troubled at that sharp, harsh, and teeth-edging noise that Smiths make in filing of brasse, or scraping of iron and steele together: others will be offended, if they but heare one chew his meat somewhat aloud; nay, some will be angrie with, or hate a man, that either speaks in the nose, or rattles in the throat. That piping prompter of *Gracchus*, who mollified, raised, and wound his masters voice, whilst he was making Orations at *Rome*; what good did he, if the motion and qualitie of the sound, had not the force to move, and efficacie to alter the auditories judgment? Verily, there is great cause to make so much adoe, and keepe such a coyle about the constancie and firmnesse of this goodly piece, which suffers it selfe to be handled, changed, and turned by the motion and accident of so light a winde. The very same cheating and cozening, that senses bring to our understanding, themselves receive it in their turnes. Our mind doth like wise take revenge of it, they lie, they cog, and deceive one another a vie. What we see and heare, being passionately transported by anger, we neither see nor heare it as it is.

*Et solem geminum, et duplices se ostendere Thebas.*

—*Vmo. Æn. iv. 470.*

That two Sunnes doe appeare  
And double *Thebes* are there.

The object which we love, seemeth much more fairer unto us, then it is;

*Multimodis igitur praeos turpesque videmus*

*Esse in delitiis, nunquamque in honore vigere.*—*Lucr. iv. 1147.*

We therefore see that those, who many waies are bad,  
And fowle, are yet belov'd, and in chiefe honour had;



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

and that much fowler, which we loath. To a pensive and heart-grieved man, a cleare day seemes gloomie and duskie. Our senses are not onely altered, but many times dulled, by the passions of the mind. How many things see we, which we perceive not, if our mind be either busied or distracted else where?

—*in rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,  
Si non advertas animum, proinde esse, quasi omni  
Tempore semotæ fuerint, longèque remotæ.*—*Ibid.* 808.

Ev'n in things manifest it may be seene,  
If you marke not, they are, as they had beene,  
At all times sever'd farre, remooved cleane.

The soule seemeth to retire her selfe into the inmost parts, and ammuseth the senses faculties: So that both the inward and outward parts of man are full of weaknes and falshood. Those which have compared our life unto a dreame, have happily had more reason so to doe, then they were aware. When we dreame, our soule liveth, worketh and exerciseth all her faculties, even, and as much, as when it waketh; and if more softly, and obscurely; yet verily not so, as that it may admit so great a difference, as there is betweene a darke night, and a cleare day: Yea as betweene a night and a shadow: There it sleepeth, here it slumbreth: More or lesse, they are ever darkneses, yea Cimmerian darkneses. We wake sleeping, and sleep waking. In my sleep I see not so cleare; yet can I never find my waking cleare enough, or without dimnesse. Sleepe also in his deepest rest, doth sometimes bring dreames asleepe: But our waking is never so vigilant, as it may clearely purge and dissipate the ravings or idle phantasies, which are the dreames of the waking, and worse then dreames. Our reason and soule, receiving the phantasies and opinions, which sleeping seize on them, and authorising our dreames actions, with like appro-

## THE SECOND BOOKE

bation, as it doth the daies. Why make we not a doubt, whether our thinking, and our working be another dreaming, and our waking some kind of sleeping? If the senses be our first Judges, it is not ours that must only be called to counsell: For, in this facultie beasts have as much (or more) right, as we. It is most certaine, that some have their hearing more sharpe then man; others their sight; others their smelling; others their feeling, or taste. *Democritus* said, that Gods and beasts had the sensitive faculties much more perfect than man. Now betweene the effects of their senses and ours, the difference is extreame. Our spettle cleanseth and drieth our sores, and killeth Serpents.

CHAPTER  
XII  
An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Tantaque in his rebus distantia differitasque est,  
Ut quod aliis cibus est, aliis fuit acre venenum.  
Sæpe etenim serpens, hominis contacta saliva,  
Disperit, ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa.*—*LUCR.* iv. 640.

There is such distance, and such difference in these things,  
As what to one is meate, t' another poison brings  
For oft a Serpent toucht with spettle of a man  
Doth die, and gnaw it selfe with fretting all he can.

What qualitie shall we give unto spettle, either according to us, or according to the Serpent? by which two senses shall we verifie its true essence, which we seeke for? *Pliny* saith, that there are certaine Sea-hares in *India*, that to us are poison, and we bane to them; so that we die, if we but touch them; now whether is man or the Sea-hare poison? Whom shall we beleewe, either the fish of man, or the man of fish? Some quality of the ayre infecteth man, which nothing at all hurteth the Oxe: Some other the Oxe, and not man: Which of the two is either in truth, or nature the pestilent quality? Such as are troubled with the yellow jandise, deeme all



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

things they looke upon to be yellowish, which seeme more pale and wan to them then to us.

*Lurida præterea fiunt quæcunque tuentur  
Arquati.—Ibid. 333.*

And all that jaundis'd men behold,  
They yellow straight or palish hold.

Those which are sicke of the disease which Phisitions call *Hyposphagma*, which is a suffusion of blood under the skin, imagine that all things they see are bloodie and red. Those humors that so change the sights operation, what know we whether they are predominant and ordinarie in beasts? For, we see some, whose eyes are as yellow as theirs that have the jandise, others, that have them all blood-shotten with rednesse: It is likely that the objects-collour they looke upon, seemeth otherwise to them then to us: Which of the two judgements shall be true? For, it is not said, that the essence of things, hath reference to man alone. Hardnesse, whitenesse, depth and sharpnesse, touch the service and concerne the knowledge of beasts as well as ours: Nature hath given the use of them to them, as well as to us. When we winke a little with our eye, wee perceive the bodies we looke upon to seeme longer and outstretched. Many beasts have their eye as winking as we. This length is then happily the true forme of that body, and not that which our eyes give it, being in their ordinarie seate. If we close our eye above, things seeme double unto us.

*Bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis,  
Et duplices hominum facies, et corpora bina.*  
—*Ibid.* 452, 454.

The lights of candels double flaming then;  
And faces twaine, and bodies twaine of men.

If our eares chance to be hindred by any thing, or that the passage of our hearing bee stop't, we



## THE SECOND BOOKE

receive the sound otherwise, then we were ordinarily wont. Such beasts as have hairie eares, or that in lieu of an eare have but a little hole, doe not by consequence heare that we heare, and receive the sound other than it is. We see at solemne shewes or in Theaters, that opposing any collour'd glasse betweene our eyes and the torches light, whatsoever is in the roome seemes or greene, or yellow, or red unto us, according to the collour of the glasse.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Et vulgò faciunt id lutea rursaque vela,  
Et ferruginea, cum magnis intenta theatris  
Per malos volgata trabesque tremantia pendent;  
Namque ibi concessum caveai subter, et omnem  
Scenai speciem, patrum matrumque deorumque  
Inficiunt cognatque suo volitare colore.—Ibid. 73.*

And yellow, russet, rustie curtaines worke this feate  
In common sights abroad, where over skaffolds great  
Stretched on masts, spred over beames, they hang still  
waving.

All the seates circuit there, and all the stages braving,  
Of fathers, mothers, Gods, and all the circled shewe  
They double-lie and in their collours make to flowe.

It is likely, that those beasts eyes, which we see to be of divers collours, produce the apparances of those bodies they looke upon, to be like their eyes. To judge the senses operation, it were then necessary we were first agreed with beasts, and then betweene our selves, which we are not, but ever-and-anon disputing about that one seeth, heareth or tasteth something to be other, then indeed it is; and contend as much as about any thing else, of the diversity of those images, our senses report unto us. A yong child heareth, seeth, and tasteth otherwise by natures ordinary rule, then a man of thirtie yeares; and he otherwise then another of threescore. The senses are to some more obscure and dimme, and to some more open and quicke. We receive things differently,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

according as they are, and seeme unto us. Things being then so uncertaine, and full of controversie, it is no longer a wonder if it be told us, that we may avouch snow to seeme white unto us; but to affirme that its such in essence and in truth, we cannot warrant our selves: which foundation being so shaken, all the Science in the world must necessarily goe to wracke. What? doe our senses themselves hinder one another? To the sight a picture seemeth to be raised aloft, and in the handling flat: Shall we say that muske is pleasing or no, which comforteth our smelling and offendeth our taste; there are Hearbs and Ointments, which to some parts of the body are good, and to othersome hurtfull. Honie is pleasing to the taste, but unpleasing to the sight. Those jewels wrought and fashioned like feathers or sprigs, which in impreses are called, feathers without ends, no eye can discern the bredth of them, and no man warrant himselve from this deception, that on the one end or side it groweth not broder and broder, sharper and sharper, and on the other more and more narrow, especially being rouled about ones finger, when notwithstanding in handling, it seemeth equal in bredth, and every where alike. Those who to encrease and aide their luxury were anciently wont to use perspective or looking glasses, fit to make the object they represented, appeare very big and great, that so the members they were to use, might by that ocular increase please them the more: to whether of the two senses yeelded they, either to the sight presenting those members as big and great as they wisht them, or to the feeling, that presented them little and to be disdained? Is it our senses that lend these diverse conditions unto subjects, when for all that, the subjects have but one? as we see in the Bread we eate: it is but Bread, but one using it, it maketh bones, blood, flesh, haire, and nailes thereof:

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*U' cibis in membra atque artus cum diditur omnes  
Duperit, atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se.—Ibid. iii. 728.*

As meate distributed into the members, dies,  
Another nature yet it perishing supplies.

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

The moistnesse which the roote of a tree suckes, becomes a trunke, a leafe and fruite : And the aire being but one ; applied unto a trumpet, becommeth diverse in a thousand sorts of sounds. Is it our senses (say I) who likewise fashion of diverse qualities those subjects, or whether have they them so and such ? And upon this doubt, what may wee conclude of their true essence ? Moreover, since the accidents of sicknesse, of madnesse, or of sleepe, make things appeare other unto us, then they seeme unto the healthie, unto the wise, and to the waking : Is it not likely, that our right seate and naturall humors, have also wherewith to give a being unto things, having reference unto their condition, and to appropriate them to it selfe, as doe inordinate humors ; and our health as capable to give them his visage, as sicknesse ! Why hath not the temperate man some forme of the objects relative unto himselfe, as the intemperate : and shall not he likewise imprint his Character in them ? The distasted impute wallowishnes unto Wine : the healthie, good taste ; and the thirsty brisknesse, rellish and delicacie. Now our condition appropriating things unto it selfe, and transforming them to its owne humour : wee know no more how things are in sooth and truth : For : *nothing comes unto us but falsified and altered by our senses.* Where the compasse, the quadrant or the ruler are crooked : all proportions drawne by them, and all the buildings erected by their measure, are also necessarily defective and imperfect. The uncertaintie of our senses yeelds what ever they produce, also uncertaine.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Denique ut in fabrica, si prava est regula prima,  
Normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,  
Et libella aliquâ si ex parte claudicat hilum,  
Omnia mendosè fieri, atque obstipa necessum est,  
Prava, cubantia, prona, supina, atque absona tecta,  
Jam ruere ut quædam videantur velle, ruantque  
Prodita judicis fallacibus omnia primis.  
Hic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necesse est,  
Falsaque sit falsis quæcunque à sensibus orta est.*

—*Ibid.* iv. 514.

As in building if the first rule be to blame,  
And the deceitfull squire erre from right forme and frame,  
If any instrument want any jot of weight,  
All must needs faultie be, and stooping in their height,  
The building naught, absurd, upward and downeward bended,  
As if they meant to fall, and fall, as they intended;  
And all this as betrayde  
By judgements formost laid.  
Of things the reason therefore needs must faultie bee  
And false, which from false senses drawes its pedegree.

As for the rest, who shall bee a competent Judge in these differences? As wee said in controversies of religion, that we must have a judge enclined to neither party, and free from partialitie, or affection, which is hardly to be had among Christians; so hapneth it in this: For if he be old, he cannot judge of ages sense; himself being a party in this controversie: and so if he be yong, healthy, sicke, sleeping or waking, it is all one: We had need of some body void and exempted from all these qualities, that without any preoccupation of judgement might judge of these propositions as indifferent unto him: By which account we should have a Judge, that were no man. To judge of the apparences that we receive of subjects, we had need have a judicatorie instrument: to verifie this instrument, we should have demonstration; and to approve demonstration, an instrument: thus are we ever turning round. Since the senses cannot determine our disputation, themselves being so full of uncertainty, it must then be

## THE SECOND BOOKE

reason: And no reason can be established without another reason; then are we ever going backe into infinity. Our phantasie doth not apply it selfe to strange things, but is rather conceived by the interposition of senses; and senses cannot comprehend a strange subject; Nay not so much as their owne passions; and so, nor the phantasie, nor the apparence is the subjects, but rather the passions only, and sufferance of the sense: which passion and subject are divers things: Therefore *who judgeth by apparences, judgeth by a thing different from the subject.* And to say, that the senses passions referre the qualitie of strange subjects by resemblance unto the soule: How can the soule and the understanding rest assured of that resemblance, having of it selfe no commerce with forraigne subjects? Even as he that knowes not *Socrates*, seeing his picture, cannot say that it resembleth him. And would a man judge by apparences, be it by all, it is impossible; for by their [contrarieties] and differences they hinder one another, as we see by experience. May it be that some choice apparences rule and direct the others? This choice must be verified by another choice, the second by a third: and so shal we never make an end. In few, *there is no constant existence, neither of our being, nor of the objects.* And we, and our judgement, and all mortall things else do uncessantly rowle, turne, and passe away. Thus can nothing be certainly established, nor of the one, nor of the other; both the judgeing and the judged being in continuall alteration and motion. We have no communication with being; for every humane nature is ever in the middle betweene being borne and dying; giving nothing of it selfe but an obscure apparence and shadow, and an uncertaine and weake opinion. And if perhaps you fix your thought to take its being; it would be even, as if one should go about

CHAPTE  
XII

An Apolog  
of Raymor  
Sebond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

to graspe the water; for, how much the more he shal close and presse that, which by its owne nature is ever gliding, so much the more he shall loose what he would hold and fasten. Thus, seeing all things are subject to passe from one change to another; reason, which therein seeketh a reall subsistence, findes her selfe deceived as unable to apprehend any thing subsistent and permanent: forsomuch as each thing either commeth to a being, and is not yet altogether; or beginneth to dy before it be borne. *Plato* said, that bodies had never an existence but indeed a birth, supposing that *Homer* made the *Ocean* Father, and *Thetis* Mother of the Gods, thereby to shew us, that all things are in continuall motion, change and variation. As he sayth, a common opinion amongst all the Philosophers before his time; Only *Parmenides* excepted, who denied any motion to be in things of whose power he maketh no small accoumpt. *Pithagoras*, that each thing or matter was ever gliding, and labile. The Stoicks affirme, there is no present time, and that which we call present, is but conjoyning and assembling of future time and past. *Heracitus* averreth that no man ever entered twice one same river. *Epicarmus* avoucheth, that who ere while borrowed any mony, doth not now owe it; and that he who yesternight was bidden to dinner this day, commeth to day unbidden; since they are no more themselves, but are become others: and that one mortall substance could not twice be found in one selfe estate: for by the sodainesse and lightnesse of change, sometimes it wasteth, and other times it assembleth; now it comes and now it goes; in such sort, that he who beginneth to be borne, never comes to the perfection of being. For, this being borne commeth never to an end, nor ever stayeth as being at an end; but after the seed pro-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

ceedeth continually in change and alteration from one to another. As of mans seed, there is first made a shapelesse fruit in the Mothers Wombe, then a shapen Childe, then being out of the Wombe, a sucking babe, afterward he becometh a ladde, then consequently a stripling, then a full growne man, then an old man, and in the end an aged decrepite man. So that age and subsequent generation goeth ever undoing and wasting the precedent.

CHAPTER  
XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond

*Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas,  
Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,  
Nec manet ulla sui similis res, omnia migrant,  
Omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit.*

—*Ibid.* v. 837.

Of th' universall world, age doth the nature change,  
And all things from one state must to another range,  
No one thing like it selfe remaines, all things doe passe,  
Nature doth change, and drive to change, each thing that  
was.

And when we doe foolishly feare a kind of death, when as we have already past, and dayly passe so many others. For, not only (as *Heracitus* said) the death of fire is a generation of ayre; and the death of ayre, a generation of Water: But also we may most evidently see it in our selves. The flower of age dieth, fadeth and fleeteth, when age comes upon us, and youth endeth in the flower of a full growne mans age: Child-hood in youth, and the first age, dieth in infancie: and yesterday endeth in this day, and to day shall die in to morrow. And *nothing remaineth or ever continueth in one state.* For to prove it, if we should ever continue one and the same, how is it then, that now we rejoyce at one thing, and now at another? How comes it to passe, we love things contrary, or we hate them, or we love them, or we blame them? How is it, that we have different affections, holding no more the same sense

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XII

in Apologie  
Raymond  
ebond

in the same thought? For it is not likely, that without alteration we should take other passions, and *what admitteth alterations, continueth not the same*: and if it be not one selfe same, than is it not: but rather with being all one, the simple being doth also change, ever becomming other from other. And by consequence Natures senses are deceived and lie falsly; taking what appeareth for what is; for want of truly knowing what it is that is. But then what is it, that is indeed? That which is eternall, that is to say, that which never had birth, nor ever shall have end; and to which no time can bring change or cause alteration. For time is a fleeting thing, and which appeareth as in a shadow, with the matter ever gliding, alwaies fluent, without ever being stable or permanent; to whom rightly belong these termes, *Before* and *After*; and, it *Hath beene*, or *Shall be*. Which at first sight doth manifestly shew, that it is not a thing, which is; for, it were great sottishnesse, and apparent false-hood, to say, that that is which is not yet in being, or that already hath ceased from being. And concerning these words, *Present*, *Instant*, *Even now*, by which it seemes, that especially we uphold and principally ground the intelligence of time; reason discovering the same, doth forthwith destroy it: for presently it severeth it a sunder and divideth it into future and past time, as willing to see it necessarily parted in two. As much happeneth unto nature, which is measured according unto time, which measureth her: for no more is there any thing in her, that remaineth or is subsistent: rather all things in her are either borne or ready to be borne, or dying. By meanes whereof, it were a sinne to say of God, who is the only that is, that he was or shall be: for these words are declinations, passages, or Vicissitudes of that, which cannot last, nor continue in being. Where-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

fore we must conclude; that only God is, not according to any measure of time, but according to an immoveable and immutable eternity, not measured by time, nor subject to any declination, before whom nothing is, nor nothing shall be after, nor more new nor more recent, but one really being: which by one onely Now or Present, filleth the Ever, and there is nothing that truly is, but he alone: Without saying, he hath bin, or he shall be, without beginning, and sans ending. To this so religious conclusion of a heathen man, I will only adde this word, taken from a testimony of the same condition, for an end of this long and tedious discourse which might well furnish me with endlesse matter. *Oh what a vile and abject thing is man* (saith he) *unlesse he raise himselfe above humanity!* Observe here a notable speech, and a profitable desire; but likewise absurd. For to make the handfull greater then the hand, and the embraced greater then the arme; and to hope to straddle more then our legs length; is impossible and monstrous: nor that man should mount over and above himselfe or humanity; for, he cannot see but with his owne eyes, nor take hold but with his owne armes. He shall raise himselfe up, if it please God extraordinarily to lend him his helping hand. He may elevate himselfe by forsaking and renouncing his owne meanes, and suffering himselfe to be elevated and raised by meere heavenly meanes. It is for our Christian faith, not for his Stoicke vertue to pretend or aspire to this divine Metamorphosis, or miraculous transmutation,

### CHAPTER XII

An Apologie  
of Raymond  
Sebond



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

### *Of judging of others death*

#### CHAPTER XIII

#### *Of judging of others death*



WHEN we judge of others assurance or boldnesse in death, which without all peradventure, is the most remarkeable action of humane life, great heed is to be taken of one thing, which is, that a man will hardly beleieve he is come to that point. Few men die with a resolution, that it is their last houre; And no wher doth hopes deceit amuse us more. She never ceaseth to ring in our eares, that others have beene sicker, and yet have not died; the cause is not so desperate as it is taken; and if the worst happen, God hath done greater wonders. The reason is, that we make too much account of our selves. It seemeth, that the generality of things doth in some sort suffer for our annullation, and takes compassion of our state. Forso much as our sight being altered, represents unto it selfe things alike; and we imagine, that things faile it, as it doth to them: As they who travell by Sea, to whom mountaines, fields, townes, heaven and earth, seeme to goe the same motion, and keepe the same course, they doe:

*Provehimur portu, terræque urbésque recedunt.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* iii. 72.

We sayling launch from harbour, and  
Behinde our backes leave townes, leave land.

Who ever saw old age, that commended not times past, and blamed not the present, charging the world and mens customes with her misery, and lowring discontent?

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Jamque caput quassans grandis suspirat arator,  
Et cum tempora temporibus præsentia confert  
Præteritis, laudat fortunas sæpe parentis  
Et crepat antiquum genus ut pietate repletum.*

—LUCR. II. 113.

### CHAPTER XIII

Of judging of  
others death

The gray-beard Plow-man sighes, shaking his hoarie head,  
Compares times that are now, with times past heretofore,  
Praises the fortunes of his father long since dead,  
And crackes of ancient men, whose honesty was more.

We entertaine and carry all with us: Whence it followeth, that we deeme our death to be some great matter, and which passeth not so easily, nor without a solemne consultation of the Starres; *Tot circa unum caput tumultuantes Deos. So many Gods keeping a stirre about one mans life.* And so much the more we thinke it, by how much the more we praise our selves. What? should so much learning and knowledge be lost with so great dammage, without the Destinies particular care? A soule so rare and exemplar, costs it no more to be killed, then a popular and unprofitable soule? This life, that covereth so many others, of whom so many other lives depend, that, for his use possesseth so great a part of the world and filleth so many places, is it displaced as that which holdeth by its owne simple string? No one of us thinkes it sufficient, to be but one. Thence came those words of *Cæsar* to his pilot, more proudly swolne, then the Sea that threatned him:

*Italiam si cælo authore recusas,  
Me pete: sola tibi causa hæc est, justa timoris,  
Vectorem non noxæ tuum; per rumpe procellas  
Tutelâ secure mei.* LUCAN, III. 579.

If *Italie* thou doe refuse with heaven thy guide,  
Turne thee to me: to thee only just cause of feare  
Is that thy passinger thou know'st not: stormie tide  
Breake through, secure by guard of me, whom thou dost beare.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER And these :

### XIII

Of judging of  
others death

—*credit jam digna pericula Cæsar*  
*Fatis esse suis : tantusque evertere (dixit)*  
*Me superis labor est, parvâ quem puppe sedentem,*  
*Tam magno petiere mari.*—*Ibid.* 653.

Cæsar doth now beleevè those dangers worthie are  
Of his set fate ; and saies, doe Gods take so much pain  
Me to undoe, whom they thus to assault prepare  
Set in so small a skiffe, in such a surging maine ?

And this common foppery, that *Phœbus* for one  
whole yeare, bare mourning weedes on his forehead  
for the death of him :

*Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cæsare Romam,*  
*Cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit.*  
—*Virg. Georg.* i. 466.

The Sunne did pittie take of *Rome* when *Cæsar* dide,  
When he his radiant head in obscure rust did hïde.

And a thousand such, wherewith the world suffers  
it selfe to be so easily conicatcht, deeming that our  
owne interests disturbe heaven, and his infinitie is  
moved at our least actions. *Non tanta cælo societas*  
*nobiscum est, ut nostro fato mortalis sit ille quoque*  
*siderum fulgor* (*PLIN. nat. hist.* ii. c. 8). *There is no*  
*such societie betweene heaven and us, that by our*  
*destinie the shining of the starres should be mortall as*  
*we are.* And to judge a resolution and constancie in  
him, who though he be in manifest danger, doth not  
yet beleevè it, it is no reason : And it sufficeth not,  
that he die in that ward, unlesse he have directly,  
and for that purpose put himselfe into it : It hapneth,  
that most men set a sterne countenance on the matter,  
looke big, and speake stoutly, thereby to acquire re-  
putation, which if they chance to live, they hope to  
enjoy. Of all I have seene die, fortune hath disposed  
their countenances, but not their desseignes. And of



## THE SECOND BOOKE

those which in ancient times have put themselves to death, the choise is great, whether it were a sodaine death, or a death having time and leasure. That cruell Romane Emperor said of his prisoners, that he would make them feelee death: And if any fortun'd to kill himselfe in prison, That fellow hath escaped me (would he say.) He would extend and linger death, and cause it be felt by torments.

CHAPTER

XIII

Of judging of  
others death

*Vidimus et tota quamvis in corpore caso,  
Nil animæ lethale datum, moremque nefandæ  
Durum scilicet, pereuntis parcere morti.*—LUCAN, li. 179.

And we have seene, when all the body tortur'd lay,  
Yet no stroke deadly giv'n, and that in humane way  
Of tyranny, to spare his death that sought to die.

Verily, it is not so great a matter, being in perfect health, and well settled in mind, for one to resolve to kill himselfe: It is an easie thing to shew stoutnesse and play the wag before one come to the pinch. So that *Heliogabalus* the most dissolute man of the world, amidst his most riotous sensualities, intended, whensoever occasion should force him to it, to have a daintie death. Which, that it might not degenerate from the rest of his life, he had purposely caused a stately towre to be built, the nether part and fore-court whereof was floored with boardes richly set and enchased with gold and precious stones, from-off which he might headlong throwe himselfe downe: He had also caused cordes to be made of gold and crimson silke, therewith to strangle himselfe: and a rich golden rapier, to thrust himselfe through: and kept poison in boxes of Emeraldes and Topases, to poison himselfe with, according to the humor he might have, to chuse which of these deaths should please him.

*Impiger et fortis virtute coactâ.*—iv. 797. Gurio.

A ready minded gallant,  
And in forst valour valiant.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XIII

Of judging of  
others death

Notwithstanding, touching this man, the wantonnesse of his preparation makes it more likely that he would have fainted, had he beene put to his triall. But even of those, who most undantedly have resolved themselves to the execution, we must consider (I say) whether it were with a life ending stroke, and that tooke away any leasure to feele the effect thereof. For it is hard to guesse, seeing life droope away by little and little, the bodies-feeling entermingling it self with the soules, meanes of repentance being offered, whether in so dangerous an intent, constancie or obstinacie were found in him. In *Cæsars* civill warres, *Lucius Domitius* taken in *Prussia*, having empoysoned himselfe, did afterward rue and repent his deede. It hath hapned in our daies, that some having resolved to die, and at first not stricken deepe enough, the smarting of his flesh, thrusting his arme backe, twice or thrice more wounded himselfe anew, and yet could never strike sufficiently deepe. Whilst the arraignment of *Plautius Silvanus* was preparing, *Urgulania* his grandmother, sent him a poignard, wherewith not able to kill himselfe thoroughly, he caused his owne servants to cutte his veines. *Albucilla* in *Tiberius* time, purposing to kill her selfe, but striking over faintly, gave her enemies leasure to apprehend and imprison her, and appoint her what death they pleased. So did Captaine *Demosthenes* after his discomfiture in *Sicilie*. And C. *Fimbria* having over feeblie wounded himselfe, became a sutor to his boy, to make an end of him. On the other side, *Ostorius*, who forsomuch as he could not use his owne arme, disdained to employ his servants in any other thing but to hold his dagger stiffe and strongly; and taking his running, himselfe caried his throate to its point, and so was thrust through. To say truth, it is a meate a man must swallow without chewing, un-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

lesse his throate bee frostshod. And therefore *Adrianus* the Emperour made his Physition to marke and take the just compasse of the mortall place about his pap, that so his aime might not faile him, to whom he had given charge to kill him. Loe why *Cæsar* being demanded, which was the death he most allowed, answered, *the least premeditated, and the shortest*. If *Cæsar* said it, it is no faintnesse in me to believe it. *A short death (saith Plinie) is the chiefe happe of humane life*. It grieveth them to acknowledge it. No man can be said, to be resolved to die, that feareth to purchase it, and that cannot abide to looke upon, and out-stare it with open eies. Those which in times of execution are seene to runne to their end, and hasten the execution, doe it not with resolution, but because they will take away time to consider the same; it grieves them not to be dead, but to die.

CHAPTER  
XIII

Of judging o  
others death

*Emori nolo, sed me esse mortuum, nihil ætamo.*  
—*Cic. Tus. Qu. i. Epicha.*

I would not die too soone.  
But care not, when tis doone.

It is a degree of constancie, unto which I have experienced to arive, as those that cast themselves into danger, or into the Sea, with closed eies. In mine opinion, there is nothing more worthy the noting in *Socrates* life, then to have had thirty whole daies to ruminare his deaths-decree, to have digested it all that while, with an assured hope, without dismay or alteration, and with a course of actions and words, rather suppress, and loose-hanging, then out-stretched and raised by the weight of such a cogitation. That *Pomponius Atticus*, to whom *Cicero* writeth, being sicke, caused *Agrippa* his sonne in law, and two or three of his other friends to be called for, to whom he said; that having assaid, how he got nothing in going about to be cured, and what he did



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XIII

judging of  
others death

to prolong his life did also lengthen and augment his griefe, he was now determined to make an end of one and other; intreating them to allow of his determination, and that by no meanes, they would lose their labour to dissuade him from it. And having chosen to end his life by abstinence, his sicknes was cured by accident; The remedy he had employed to make himselfe away, brought him to health againe. The Physitions, and his friends, glad of so happy a successe, and rejoycing thereof with him, were in the end greatly deceived; for, with all they could doe, they were never able to make him alter his former opinion, saying, that as he must one day passe that careire, and being now so forward, he would remove the care, another time to beginne againe. This man having with great leasure apprehended death, is not only no whit discouraged, when he comes to front it, but resolutely falls upon it: for being satisfied of that, for which he was entred the combate, in a braverie he thrust himselfe into it, to see the end of it. It is farre from fearing death, to goe about to taste and savour the same. The historie of *Cleanthes* the Philosopher is much like to this. His gummes being swolne, his Physitions perswaded him to use great abstinence; having fasted two daies, he was so well amended, as they told him he was well, and might returne to his wonted course of life. He contrarily, having already tasted some sweetnes in this fainting, resolveth not to draw backe, but finish what he had so well begunne, and was so farre waded into. *Tullius Marcellinus*, a yong Romane Gentleman, willing to prevent the houre of his destiny, to ridde himselfe of a disease, which tormented him more than he would endure, although Physitions promised certainly to cure him, howbeit not sodainely; called his friends unto him to determine about it: some (saith *Seneca*) gave him that counsell, which for

## THE SECOND BOOKE

weaknesse of heart, themselves would have taken : **CHAPTER**  
 others for flatterie, that which they imagined would be **XIII**  
 most pleasing unto him : but a certaine Stoike stand- **Of judging of**  
 ing by, said thus unto him. *Toile not thy selfe Mar-  
*cellinus, as if thou determinedst some weightie matter ;*  
*to live is no such great thing, thy base groomes and*  
*[brute] beasts live also, but it is a matter of consequence*  
*to die honestly, wisely and constantly. Remember how*  
*long it is thou doest one same thing, to eate, to drinke,*  
*and sleepe, to drinke, to sleepe, to eate. Wee are ever*  
*uncessantly wheeling in this endlesse circle. Not only*  
 bad and intolerable accidents, but the very satiety to  
 live, brings a desire of death. *Marcellinus* had no  
 need of a man to counsell, but of one to helpe  
 him : his servants were afraid to meddle with him ;  
 but this Philosopher made them to understand, that  
 familiars are suspected, onely when the question is,  
 whether the maisters death have beene voluntary :  
 otherwise it would bee as bad an example to hinder  
 him, as to kill him, forasmuch as,*

*Inuitum qui seruat, idem facit occidenti.*

—*Hon. Art. Poet.* 467.

Who saves a man against his will,  
 Doth ev'n as much as he should kill.

Then he advertized *Marcellinus*, that it would  
 not be unseemely, as fruit or confets at our tables,  
 when our bellies be full, are given unto by-standers,  
 so the life ended, to distribute something to such as  
 have beene the ministers of it. *Marcellinus* being of  
 a frank and liberal disposition, caused certaine summes  
 of mony to be divided amongst his servants, and com-  
 forted them. And for the rest there needed neither  
 yron nor blood, he undertooke to depart from this  
 life, not by running from it : Not to escape from  
 death, but to taste it. And to have leisure to condi-  
 tion or bargaine with death, having quit all manner

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XIII

Of judging of  
others death

of nourishment, the third day ensuing, after he had caused himselfe to be sprinkled over with luke-warme water, by little and litle he consumed away; and (as he said) not without some voluptuousnesse and pleasure. Verily, such as have had these faintings and swoownings of the heart, which proceed from weaknesse, say, that they feele no paine at all in them, but rather some pleasure, as of a passage to sleepe and rest. These are premeditated, and digested deaths. But that *Cato* alone, may serve to all examples of vertue, it seemeth, his good destiny caused that hand wherewith he gave himselfe the fatall blow, to be sicke and sore: that so hee might have leisure to affront death and to embrace it, reenforcing his courage in that danger, in lieu of mollifieing the same. And should I have represented him in his proudest state, it should have beene all bloody-gored, tearing his entrailles, and rending his gutts, rather then with a sword in his hand, as did the statuaries of his time. For, this second murther, was much more furious, then the first.

### THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

*How that our spirit hindereth it selfe*



It is a pleasant imagination, to conceive a spirit justly ballanced betweene two equall desires. For, it is not to be doubted, that he shall never be resolved upon any match: Forsomuch as the application and choise brings an inequality of prise: And who should place us betweene a Bottle of wine, and a Gammon of Bacon, with an equall appetite to eat and drinke, doubtlesse there were noe remedy, but to die of thirst and of hunger. To provide against this inconvenient, when



## THE SECOND BOOKE

the Stoikes were demanded, whence the election of two indifferent things commeth into our soule (and which causeth, that from out a great number of Crownes or Angells we rather take one then another, when there is no reason to induce us to preferre any one before others) they answer, that this motion of the soule is extraordinarie and irregular, comming into us by a strange, accidentall and casuall impulsion. In my opinion, it might rather be said, that nothing is presented unto us, wherein there is not some difference, how light so ever it bee: And that either to the sight, or to the feeling, there is ever some choise, which tempteth and drawes us to it, though imperceptible and not to bee distinguished. In like manner, hee that shall presuppose a twine-thrid equally strong all-through, it is impossible by all impossibilitie that it breake, for, where would you have the flaw or breaking to beginne? And at once to breake in all places together, it is not in nature. Who should also adde to this, the Geometricall propositions, which by the certainty of their demonstrations, conclude, the contained greater then the containing, and the centre as great as his circumference: And that finde two lines uncessantly approaching one unto another, and yet can never meete and joyne together: And the Philosophers stone, and quadrature of the circle, where the reason and the effects are so opposite: might peradventure draw thence some argument to salve and helpe this bold speech of *Pliny*; *Solum certum, nihil esse certi, et homine nihil miserius aut superbius* (*PLIN. nat. hist. ii. c. 7*). *This onely is sure, that there is nothing sure; and nothing more miserable, and yet more arrogant then man.*

CHAPTER  
XIV

How that  
our spirit  
hindereth it  
selfe

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

*That our desires are encreased by difficultie*

### CHAPTER XV

That our  
desires are  
encreased by  
difficultie



HERE is no reason but hath another contrary unto it, saith the wisest party of Philosophers. I did erewhile ruminate upon this notable saying, which an ancient writer alleageth for the contempt of life. *No good can bring us any pleasure, except that, against whose losse we are prepared: In æquo est, dolor amissæ rei, et timor amittendæ* (SEN. *Epist.* xeviii.), *Sorrow for a thing lost, and feare of losing it, are on an even ground.* Meaning to gaine thereby, that the fruition of life cannot perfectly be pleasing unto us, if we stand in any feare to lose it. A man might nevertheless say on the contrary part, that we embrace and claspe this good so much the harder, and with more affection, as we perceive it to be lesse sure, and feare it should be taken from us. For, it is manifestly found, that as fire is rouzed up by the assistance of cold, even so our will is whetted on by that which doth resist it.

*Si nunquam Danaen habuisset ahenca turris,  
Non esset Danae de Jove facta parens.*

—OVID, *Am.* ii. *El.* xix. 27.

*If Danae had not beene clos'd in brazen Tower,  
Jove had not clos'd with Danae in golden shower.*

And that there is nothing so naturally opposite to our taste, as satiety, which comes from ease and facility, nor nothing that so much sharpeneth it, as rarenesse and difficulty. *Omnium rerum voluptas ipso quo debet fugare periculo crescit.* *The delight*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*of all things encreaseth by the danger, whereby it rather should terrifie them that affect it.* CHAPTER  
XV

*Galla nega ; satiatur amor, nisi gaudia torquent.*

—MART. IV. *Epig.* xxxviii. 1.

That our  
desires are  
encreased by  
difficultie

Good wench, deny, my love is cloied,  
Unlesse joyes grieve, before enjoyed.

To keepe love in breath and longing, *Lycurgus* ordained, that the married men of *Lacedemonia* might never converse with their wives, but by stealth, and that it should be as great an imputation and shame to finde them laid together, as if they were found lying with others. The difficulty of assignations or matches appointed, the danger of being surprised, and the shame of ensuing to morrow,

—*et languor, et silentium,*  
*Et latere petitus imo spiritus.*—HOR. *Epo.* xi. 13.

And whispering voice, and languishment,  
And breath in sighes from deepe sides sent,

are the things that give relish and tartnesse to the sawce. How many most laciviously-pleasant sports, proceed from modest and shamefast manner of speech, of the daliances and workes of love? Even voluptuousnesse seekes to provoke and stirre it selfe up by smarting. It is much sweeter when it itcheth, and endeared when it gauleth. The curtezan *Flora* was wont to say, that she never lay with *Pompey*, but she made him carry away the markes of her teeth.

*Quod petiere, premunt arctè, faciuntque dolorem*  
*Corporis, et dentes inludunt surse labellis :*  
*Et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant lacerare id ipsum*  
*Quodcumque est, rabies unde illi germina surgunt.*

—LUCR. IV. 1070.

So goes it every where: *Rarenesse and difficulty giveth esteeme unto things.* Those of *Marca d'Ancona* in



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XV

That our  
desires are  
encreased by  
difficultie

*Italy*, make their vows, and goe on pilgrimage rather unto *James* in *Galicia*, and those of *Galicia* rather unto our Lady of *Loreto*. In the Country of *Liege*, they make more account of the Bathes of *Luca*; and they of *Tuscany* esteeme the Baths of *Sparve* more then their owne: In *Rome* the Fence-schooles are ever full of French-men, when few Romans come unto them. Great *Cato*, as well as any else, was even cloied and distasted with his wife, so long as she was his owne, but when another mans, then wished he for her, and would faine have lickt his fingers at her. I have heretofore put forth an old stalion to soile, who before did no sooner see or smell a Mare, but was so lusty, that no man could rule him, nor no ground hold him; ease and facilitie, to come to his owne when he list, hath presently quailed his stomacke, and so cloyed him, that he is weary of them: But toward strange Mares, and the first that passeth by his pasture, there is no hoe with him, but suddenly he returnes to his old wonted neighings, and furious heate. Our appetite doth contemne and passe over what he hath in his free choise and owne possession, to runne after and pursue what he hath not.

*Transvolat in medio posita, et fugientia captat.*

—HOR. Ser. i. Sat. ii. 107.

It over flies what open lies,  
Pursuing onely that which flies.

*To forbid us any thing, is the ready way to make us long for it.*

—*nisi tu servare puellam*

*Incipis, incipiet desinere esse mea.*

—OVID, *Am. ii. El. xix. 47.*

If you begin not your wench to enshrine,  
She will begin to leave off to be mine.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

And to leave it altogether to our will, is but to  
breede dislike and contempt in us; So that to  
want, and to have store, breedeth one selfe same  
inconvenience.

CHAPTER  
XV

—  
That our  
desires are  
encreased by  
difficultie

*Tibi quod superest, mihi quod desit, dolet.*

—TER. *Phor.* act i. sce. 3.

You grieve because you have to much ;  
It griev's me that I have none such.

Wishing and injoying trouble us both alike.  
The rigor of a mistris is yrkesome, but ease and  
facility (to say true) much more; forasmuch as  
discontent and vexation proceed of the estimation  
we have of the thing desired, which sharpen love,  
and set it afire: Whereas *Satiety begets distaste*: It  
is a dull, blunt, weary, and drouzy passion.

*Si qua volet regnare diu, contemnat amantem.*

—OVID, *Am.* ii. *El.* xix. 33.

If any list long to beare sway,  
Scorne she her lover, ere she play.

—contemnite amantes,

*Sic hodie veniet, si qua negavit heri.*

—PROP. ii. *El.* xiv. 19.

Lovers, your lovers scorne, contemne, delude, deride ;  
So will shee come to day, that yesterday denied.

Why did *Poppea* devise to maske the beauties of  
her face, but to endeare them to her lovers? Why  
are those beauties veiled downe to the heeles, which  
all desire to shew, which all wish to see? Why  
doe they cover with so many lets, one over another,  
those parts, where chiefly consisteth our pleasure and  
theirs? And to what purpose serve those baricadoes,  
and verdugalles, wherewith our women arme their  
flankes, but to allure our appetite, and envengle us  
to them by putting us off?

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XV

That our  
desires are  
increased by  
difficultie

*Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.*

—VIRG. *Buco. Ecl.* iii. 65.

She to the willow's runs to hide,  
Yet gladly would she first be spide.

*Interdum tunica duxit operta moram.*

—PRO. *ibid. Eleg.* xv. 6.

She cover'd with her cote in play,  
Did sometime make a short delay.

Whereto serves this mayden-like bashfulnesse, this wilfull quaintnesse, this severe countenance, this seeming ignorance of those things, which they know better than our selves, that goe about to instruct them, but to encrease a desire, and endeare a longing in us, to vanquish, to gourmandize, and at our pleasure, to dispose all this squeamish ceremonie, and all these peevish obstacles? For, it is not only a delight, but a glory to besot and debauch this dainty and nice sweetnesse, and this infantine bashfulnesse, and to subject a marble and sterne gravity to the mercy of our flame. It is a glory (say they) to triumph over modesty, chastity and temperance: and who disswadeth Ladies from these parts, betraieth both them and himselfe. It is to be supposed, that their heart yerneth for feare, that the sound of our wordes woundeth the purity of their eares, for which they hate us, and with a forced constraint, agree to withstand our importunitie. Beauty with all her might, hath not wherewith to give a taste of her selfe without these interpositions. See in *Italie*, wher most, and of the finest beauty is to be sold, how it is forced to seek other strange meanes and suttile devises, arts and tricks, to yeeld her selfe pleasing and acceptable: and yet in good sooth, doe what it can, being venal and common, it remaineth feeble, and is even languishing. *Even as in vertue, of two equall effects, we hold that the fairest, and*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

worthiest, wherein are proposed more lets, and which affordeth greater hazards. It is an effect of Gods providence, to suffer his holy Church, to be vexed and turmoyled as we see, with so many troubles and stormes, to rouze, and awaken by this opposition and strife the godly and religious soules, and raise them from out a lethall security, and stupified slumber, wherein so long tranquillity had plunged them. If we shall counterpoize the losse we have had, by the number of those, that have strayed out of the right way, and the profit that acrueth unto us, by having taken hart of grace, and by reason of combate raised our zeale, and forces; I wot not whether the profit doth surmount the losse. We thought to tie the bond of our mariages the faster, by removing all meanes to dissolve them: but by how much faster, that of constraint hath bin tied, so much more hath that of our will and affection bin slackted and loosed: Whereas on the contrary side, that, which so long time held mariages in honour and safty in *Rome*, was the liberty to breake them who list. They kept their wives the better, forso-much as they might leave them; and when divorces might freely be had, there past five hundred years and more, before any would ever make use of them.

CHAPTER  
XV

That our  
desires are  
increased by  
difficultie

*Quod licet, ingratum est, quod non licet, acius urit.*

—OVID, *Am. li. El. xix. 3.*

What we may doe, doth little please:

It woormes us more, that hath lesse ease.

To this purpose might the opinion of an ancient Writer be adjoyned; that torments do rather encourage vices, than suppress them; that they beget not a care of well-doing, which is the worke of reason and discipline, but only a care not to be surprized in doing evill.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XV

That our  
desires are  
increased by  
difficultie

*Latius excisæ pestis contagia serpunt.*

Th' infection of the plague nigh spent  
And rooted out, yet further went.

I wot not whether it be true, but this I know by experience, that policie was never found to be reformed that way. The order and regiment of manners dependeth of some other meane. The Greeke stories make mention of the Agrippians, neighbouring upon *Scithia*, who live without any rod or staffe of offence, where not onely, no man undertakes to buckle with any other man, but who-soever can but save himselfe, there (by reason of their vertue and sanctity of life) is as it were in a Sanctuary: And no man dares so much as touch him. Many have recourse to them, to attone and take up quarrels and differences, which arise amongst men else where. There is a Nation, where the inclosures of Gardens and Fields they intend to keep severall, are made with a seely twine of cotten, which amongst them is found to be more safe and fast, then are our ditches and hedges. *Furem signata sollicitant, Aperta effractarius præterit* (SEN. *Epist.* lxix.). *Things sealed up sollicite a thiefe to breake them open: Whereas a common burglayer will passe by quietly things that lie open.* Amongst other meanes, ease and facility doth haply cover and fence my house from the violence of civill wares: Inclosure and fencing drawe on the enterprise; and distrust, the offence; I have abated and weakned the souldiers designe, by taking hazard and all meanes of military glory from their exploite, which is wont to serve them for a title, and stead them for an excuse. What is performed couragiously, at what time justice lieth dead, and law hath not her due course, is ever done honorably. I yeeld them the conquest of my house dastardly and trecherous. It is never



## THE SECOND BOOKE

shut to any that knocketh. It hath no other guardian or provision but a Porter, as an ancient custome, and used ceremony, who serveth not so much to defend my gate, as to offer it more decently and courteously to all commers. I have nor watch nor sentinell, but what the Starres keepe for mee. That Gentleman is much to blame, who makes a shew to stand upon his garde, except he be very strong indeed. Who so is open on one side, is so every where. Our Forefathers never dreamed on building of frontire Townes or Castles.

The meanes to assaile (I meane without battery, and troopes of armed men) and to surprise our houses encrease daily beyond the meanes of garding or defending. Mens wits are generally exasperated and whetted on that way. An invasion concerneth all, the defence none but the rich. Mine was sufficiently strong, according to the times when it was made. I have since added nothing unto it that way; and I would feare, the strength of it should turne against my selfe. Seeing a peaceable time will require we shall unfortifie them. It is dangerous not to be able to recover them againe, and it is hard for one to be assured of them. For, concerning intestine broiles, your owne servant may be of that faction you stand in feare of. And where religion serveth for a pretence, even alliances and consanguinitie become mistrustfull under colour of justice. Common rents cannot entertaine our private garisons. They should all be consumed. We have not wherewith, nor are wee able to doe it, without our apparent ruine, or more incommodiously, and therewithall injuriously, without the common peoples destruction. The state of my losse should not bee much worse. And if you chance to be a looser, your owne friends are readier to accuse your improvidence and unhedinesse then to moane you,

CHAPTER  
XV

That our  
desires are  
exceeded by  
difficultie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER and excuse your ignorance and carelesnesse, concerning the offices belonging to your profession.

XV

That our desires are increased by difficultie

That so many strongly-garded houses have beene lost, whereas mine continueth still, makes me suspect they were overthrowne, onely because they were so diligently garded. It is that which affoordeth a desire, and ministreth a pretence to the assailant. All gards beare a shew of warre; which if God be so pleased may light upon me. But so it is, I will never call for it. It is my sanctuary or retreate to rest my selfe from warres. I endeavour to free this corner from the publicke storme, as I doe another corner in my soule. Our warre may change forme, and multiply and diversifie how and as long as it list; but for my selfe I never stirre. Amongst so many baricaded and armed houses, none but my selfe (as farre as I know) of my quality, hath meerey trusted the protection of his unto the heavens: for I never removed neither plate, nor hangings, nor my evidences. I will neither feare, nor save my selfe by halfe. If a full acknowledgement purchaseth the favour of God, it shall last me for ever unto the end: If not, I have continued long enough, to make my continuance remarkeable, and worthy the registering. What? Is not thirtie yeares a goodly time?

## THE SECOND BOOKE

### THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

#### *Of Glory*



HERE is both name, and the thing: CHAPTER  
the name, is a voice which noteth, XVI  
and signifieth the thing: the name, Of Glory  
is neither part of thing nor of substance: it is a stranger-piece joyned to the thing, and from it. God who in and by himselfe is all fulnesse, and the type of all perfection, cannot inwardly be augmented or encreased: yet may his name be encreased and augmented, by the blessing and praise, which we give unto his exterior workes; which praise and blessing since we cannot incorporate into him, forsomuch as no accession of good can be had unto him, we ascribe it unto his name, which is a part without him, and the neerest unto him. And that is the reason why *glory and honour appertaineth to God only*. And there is nothing so repugnant unto reason, as for us to goe about to purchase any for our selves; For, being inwardly needy and defective, and our essence imperfect, and ever wanting amendment, we ought only labour about that. We are all hollow and empty, and it is not with breath and words we should fill our selves. We have need of a more solide substance to repaire our selves. *An hunger starved man might be thought most simple, rather to provide himselfe of a faire garment, then of a good meales-meate*: We must runne to that, which most concerneth us, *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus* (*Luke ii. 14*): *Glory be to God on high, and peace in earth amongst men*; As say our ordinary prayers. We are in great want of beautie, health, wisdom, vertue and such like



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVI  
Of Glory

essentiall parts. Exteriour ornaments may be sought for when we are once provided of necessary things. Divinitie doth very amply and pertinently treat of this subject, but I am not very conversant with it. *Chrysippus* and *Diogenes* have beene the first, and most constant authors of the contempt of glory. And amongst all sensualities, they said, there was none so dangerous, nor so much to be avoided, as that which commeth unto us by the approbation of others. Verily experience makes us thereby feeble, and undergoe many damageable treasons. *Nothing so much empoisoneth Princes as flattery*: Nor nothing whereby the wicked minded gaine so easie credit about them; nor any enticement so fit, nor pander-ship so ordinary to corrupt the chastity of women, then to feed and entertaine them with their praises. The first enchantment the Syrens employed to deceive *Ulysses*, is of this nature.

*Deca vers nous, deca, o treslouable Ulyse,  
Et le plus grand honneur dont la Grece fleurisse.*

Turne to us, to us turne, *Ulysses* thrice-renowned,  
The principall renowne wherewith all *Greece* is crowned.

Philosophers said, *that all the worlds glory deserved not, that a man of wisdom should so much as stretch forth his finger to acquire it.*

*Gloria quantalibet quid erit, si gloria tantum est?*

—JUVEN. Sat. vii. 81.

Never so glorious name,  
What ist, be it but fame?

I say for it alone: for it drawes many commodities after it, by which it may yeeld it selfe desirable: It purchaseth us good will: It makes us lesse exposed to others injuries and offences, and such like things. It was also one of the principall decrees of *Epicurus*: for, that precept of his Sect, **HIDE THY LIFE**, which forbideth men to meddle



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER of his last will and testament, by which he willeth,  
 XVI that *Aminomachus* and *Timocrates* his heires, should  
 Of Glory for the celebration of his birth-day every month of  
 January supply all such charges as *Hermachus* should  
 appoint: And also for the expence he might be at  
 upon the twentieth of every Moone for the feasting  
 and entertainment of the Philosophers his familiar  
 friends, who in the honour of his memorie and of  
*Metrodorus* should meete together. *Carneades* hath  
 beene chiefe of the contrary opinion, and hath main-  
 tained, that glory was in it selfe to bee desired, even  
 as we embrace our posthumes for themselves, having  
 neither knowledge nor ioyssance of them. This  
 opinion hath not missed to be more commonly fol-  
 lowed, as are ordinarily those, that fit most and come  
 nearest our inclinations. *Aristotle* amongst externall  
 goods yeeldeth the first ranke unto it: And avoideth  
 as two extreame vices, the immoderation, either in  
 seeking, or avoiding it. I beleewe, that had we  
 the bookes which *Cicero* writ upon this subject, we  
 should heare strange matters of him: for he was so  
 fond in this passion, as had he dared, he would  
 (as I thinke) have easily falne into the excesse, that  
 others fell in; which is, that even vertue was not  
 to be desired, but for the honour, which ever waited  
 on it:

*Paulum sepultæ distat inertie  
 Celata virtus.*

—HON. CAR. IV. OD. IX. 29.

There is but little difference betweene,  
 Vertue conceald, unskilfulnesse unseene.

Which is so false an opinion, as I am vexed it  
 could ever enter a mans understanding that had the  
 honour to beare the name of a Philosopher. If that  
 were true, a man needed not to be vertuous but in  
 publike: and we should never need to keepe the  
 soules operations in order and rule, which is the

## THE SECOND BOOKE

true seate of vertue, but only so much as they might come to the knowledge of others. Doth then nothing else belong unto it, but craftily to faile, and subtilly to cozen? If thou knowest a Serpent to be hidden in any place (saith *Carneades*) to which, he by whose death thou hopest to reape commodity, goeth un-awares to sit upon, thou committest a wicked act if thou warne him not of it: and so much the more, because thy action should be knowne but to thy selfe. If we take not the law of wel-doing from our selves: If impunity be justice in us; to how many kindes of trecherie are we daily to abandon our selves? That which *Sp. Peduceus* did, faithfully to restore the riches which *C. Plotius* had committed to his only trust and secrecie, and as my selfe have done often; I thinke not so commendable, as I would deeme it execrable, if we had not done it. And I thinke it beneficiall we should in our daies be mindfull of *Publius Sextilius Rufus* his example, whom *Cicero* accuseth that he had received a great inheritance against his conscience: Not only repugnant, but agreeing with the lawes. And *M. Crassus*, and *Q. Hortensius*, who by reason of their authority and might, having for certaine Quidities been called by a stranger to the succession of a forged will, that so he might make his share good: they were pleased not to be partakers of his forgery, yet refused not to take some profit of it: Very closely had they kept themselves under the countenance of the accusations, witnesses and lawes. *Meminerint Deum se habere testem, id est (ut ego arbitror) mentem suam.* Let them remember they have God to witnesse, that is, (as I construe it) their owne minde. Vertue is a vaine and frivolous thing, if it draw her commendation from glory. In vaine should we attempt to make her keepe her rancke apart, and so should we disjoyne it from fortune: for, *What is more casuall then reputa-*

CHAPTER  
XVI

Of Glory



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

XVI

Of Glory

tion? *Profecto fortuna in omni re dominatur: Ea res cunctas ex libidine magis quam ex vero celebrat obscuratque. Fortune governeth in all things, and either advanceth or abaseth them rather by forward disposition, then upright judgement.* To make actions to be knowne and seene, is the meere worke of fortune. It is chance that applieth glory unto us, according to her temeritie. I have often seene it to goe before desert; yea and many times to out-goe merit by very much. He that first bethought himselfe of the resemblance betweene shadow and glory, did better then he thought of. They are exceeding vaine things. It also often goeth before her body, and sometimes exceeds by much in length. Those who teach Nobility to seeke in valour nothing but honour: *Quasi non sit honestum quod nobilitatum non sit; As though it were not honest, except it were ennobled:* What gaine they by it? But to instruct them never to hazard themselves, unlesse they be seene of others; and to be very heedy, whether such witnesses are by, that may report newes of their valour, whereas a thousand occasions, to doe well are daily offered, and no man by to marke them? How many notable particular actions, are buried in the throng of a Battell? Whosoever ammuseth himselfe to controule others, in so confused a hurly-burly, is not greatly busied about it: and produceth the testimony which he giveth of his fellowes proceedings or exploits against himselfe. *Vera et sapiens animi magnitudo, honestum illud quod maxime naturam sequitur, in factis positum, non in gloria judicat. A true and wise magnanimitie esteemeth that honesty, which especially followeth Nature, to consist in good actions, and not in glory.* All the glory I pretend in my life, is, that I have lived quietly. Quietly not according to *Metrodorus, Arcesilas, or Aristippus*, but according to my selfe. Since Philosophie could never find any



## THE SECOND BOOKE

way for tranquillity, that might be generally good, CHAPTER  
XVI  
Of Glory  
let every man in his particular seeke for it. To whom are *Cæsar* and *Alexander* beholding for that infinite greatnes of their renowne, but to fortune? How many men hath she suppressed in the beginning of their progresse, of whom we have no knowledge at all, who bare the same courage that others did, if the ill fortune of their chance had not staid them even in the building of their enterprises? Amongst so many and so extreame dangers (to my remembrance) I never read, that *Cæsar* received any hurt. A thousand have dyed in lesse danger, than the least of those he escaped. Many worthy exploits and excellent deedes must be lost, before one can come to any good. A man is not alwaies upon the top of the breach, nor in the front of an army, in the sight of his Generall, as upon a stage. A man may be surprised betweene a hedge and a ditch. A man is sometimes put to his sodaine shifts, as to try his fortune against a Hens-roost, to ferret out foure seely shotte out of some barne, yea and sometimes straggle alone from his troupes; and enterprise, according as necessity and occasion offereth it selfe. And if it be well noted (in mine advice) it will be found, and experience doth teach it, that the least blazoned occasions, are the most dangerous; and that in our late home-warres, more good men have perished in slight and little importing occasions, and in contention about a small cottage, than in worthy atchievements, and honourable places. Who so thinketh his death ill employed, except it be in some glorious exploit, or famous attempt, in lieu of dignifying his death, he happily obscureth his life: Suffering in the meane time many just and honor-affoording oportunities to escape, wherein he might and ought adventure himselfe. And all just occasions are glorious enough; his owne conscience publishing them sufficiently to

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER all men. *Gloria nostra est testimonium conscientiae nostrae* (2 Cor. i. 12. AUG. *Hom. xxxv.*): *Our glory is the testimony of our conscience.* He that is not an honest man, but by that which other men know by him, and because he shall the better be esteemed, being knowne to be so, that will not do well but upon condition his vertue may come to the knowledge of men; such a one is no man from whom any great service may be drawne, or good expected.

XVI  
Of Glory

*Credo ch' il resto di quel verno, cose  
Facesse degne di tenerne conto,  
Ma fur fin' a quel tempo si nascose,  
Che non è colpa mia s' hor' non le conto,  
Per che Orlando a far' opre virtuose  
Piu ch' à narrare poi sempre era pronto;  
Ne mai fu alcun' de li suoi fatti espresso,  
Senon quando hebbe i testimonii appresso.*

—ARIST. *Orl. can. xi. stan. 81.*

I guesse, he of that winter all the rest  
Atchiev'd exploits, whereof to keepe account,  
But they untill that time were so supprest,  
As now my fault t'is not, them not to count,  
Because Orlando ever was more prest  
To doe, then tell deeds that might all surmount.  
Nor was there any of his deeds related  
Unlesse some wits were associated.

A man must goe to warres for his devoirs sake, and expect this recompence of it, which cannot faile all worthy actions, how secret soever; no not to vertuous thoughts: It is the contentment that a well disposed conscience receiveth in it selfe, by well doing. A man must be valiant for himselfe and for the advantage he hath to have his courage placed in a constant and assured seate, to withstand all assaults of fortune.

*Virtus repulsæ nescia sordidæ,  
Intaminatis fulget honoribus:  
Nec sumit aut ponit secures  
Arbitrio popularis auræ.*—*Hon. Car. iii. Od. ii. 17.*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Vertue unskill'd to take repulse that's base,  
In undefiled honors clearly shines,  
At the dispose of peoples airy grace  
She signes of honor tak's not, nor resignes.

### CHAPTER XVI

#### Of Glory

It is not only for an exterior shew or ostentation, that our soule must play her part, but inwardly within our selves, where no eyes shine but ours: There it doth shroud us from the feare of death, of sorrowes and of shame: There it assureth us, from the losse of our children, friends and fortunes; and when opportunitie is offerd, it also leades us to the dangers of warre. *Non emolumento aliquo, sed ipsius honestatis decore* (Cic. *Fin.* i.): *Not for any advantage, but for the gracefulness of honestie it selfe.* This benefit is much greater, and more worthie to be wished and hoped, then honor and glory, which is nought but a favorable judgement that is made of us. We are often driven to empanell and select a jury of twelve men out of a whole countrie to determine of an acre of land: And the judgement of our inclinations and actions (the waightiest and hardest matter that is) we referre it to the idle breath of the vaine voice of the common sort and base raskalitie, which is the mother of ignorance, of injustice, and inconstancie. Is it reason to make the life of a wise man depend on the judgement of fooles? *At quidquam stultius, quam quos singulis contentios, ut aliquid putare esse universos?* (CÆLIUS. *Var. Hist.* ii. c. 1.) *Is there any thing more foolish, then to thinke that all together they are wights, whom every one single you could set at naught?* Who never cometh to please them, hath never done: It is a But, that hath neither forme nor holdfast. *Nihil tam inestimabile est, quam vocis multitudinis:* *Nothing is so incomprehensible to the just mind, as the grinders of the multitude.* Demetrius said merrily of the common peoples voice he made no more reckoning of that while



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVI

Of Glory

from out his mouth above, then of that which came from a homely place below; and saith moreover: *Ego hoc judico, si quando turpe non sit, tamen non esse non turpe, quum id à multitudine laudetur* (Cic. Fin. Bon. ii.): *Thus I esteeme of it, if of it selfe it be not dishonest, yet can it not but be dishonest, when it is applauded [by] the many.* No art, no mildnesse of spirit might direct our steps to follow so stragling and disordered a guide. In this breathie confusion of brutes, and frothy Chaos of reports and of vulgar opinions which still push us on, no good course can be established. Let us not propose so fleeing and so wavering an end unto our selves. Let us constantly follow reason: And let the vulgar approbation follow us that way, If it please: And as it depends all on fortune, we have no law to hope for it, rather by any other way then by that. Should I not follow a strait path for its straightnesse, yet would I do it because experience hath taught me, that in the end, it is the happiest and most profitable. *Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis juvarent.* *Mans providence hath given him this gift, that honest things should more delight and availe him.* The ancient Sailer said thus to Neptune in a great storme, *Oh God, thou shalt save me if thou please, if not, thou shalt lose me; yet will I keepe my helme still fast.* I have, in my daies, seene a thousand [milde], mungrell and ambiguous men, and whom no man thought to be more worldly-wise than my selfe, loose themselves, where I have saved my selfe.

*Risi successu posse carere dolos.*

—OVID, *Epist. Penel.* v. 18.

I smild to see that wily plots

Might want successe (and leave men sots.)

*Paulus Æmilius* going to the glorious expedition of *Macedon*, advertized the people of *Rome* during

## THE SECOND BOOKE

his absence, not to speake of his actions: For *The* CHAPTER  
XVI  
*licence of Judgements is an especial let in great*  
*affaires.* Forasmuch as all men have not the Of Glory  
constancy of *Pabius* against common, contrary and  
detracting voices: who loved better to have his  
authority dismembred by mens vaine fantasies, then  
not to performe his charge so well, with favourable  
and popular applause. There is a kind of I know not  
what naturall delight, that man hath to heare him-  
selfe commended, but wee yeeld too too much unto it.

*Laudari haud metuum, neque enim mihi cornea fibra est,  
Sed recti finemque extremumque esse recuso  
Euge tuum et belle* — — PERS. Sat. 1. 47.

Nor feare I to be prais'd, for my guttes are not horne,  
But that the utmost end of good should be, I scorne,  
Thy O well said, well done, well plaid.

I care not so much what I am with others, as I  
respect what I am in my selfe. I will bee rich by  
my selfe, and not by borrowing. Strangers see but  
externall apparances and events: every man can set  
a good face upon the matter, when within he is full  
of care, grieve and infirmities. They see not my  
heart, when they looke upon my outward counten-  
ance. There is great reason the hypocrisie that is  
found in war should be discovered: For, what is  
more easie in a man of practise, then to flinch in  
dangers and to counterfeit a gallant and a boaster  
when his heart is full of faintnesse, and ready to  
droope for feare? There are so many waies to  
shunne occasions for a man to hazard himselfe in  
particular, that wee shall have deceived the world a  
thousand times, before we need engage our selves  
into any perillous attempt; and even when wee find  
our selves entangled in it, wee shall not want skill  
how to cloake our sport with a good face, stearne  
countenance, and bold speeches; although our heart



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVI  
Of Glory

doe quake within us. And hee that had the use of the Platonick Ring, whose vertue was to make him invisible that wore it upon his finger, if it were turned toward the flat of the hand; many would hide themselves, when they should most make shewe of their worth, and would be sorie to be placed in so honorable a place, where necessity may be their warrant of safetie.

*Falsus honor iuvat, et mendax infamia terret  
Quem nisi mendosum et mendacem?*

—HOR. i. Epi. xvi. 39.

False honour tickles; false defame affrights,  
Whom, but the faulty, and [falsified] sprights?

See how all these judgements, that men make of outward apparances, are wonderfully uncertaine and doubtfull, and there is no man so sure a testimony, as every man is to himselfe: How many horse-boyes have we in them as parteners and companions of our glory? He that keepes his stand in an open trench, what doth he more, but divers poore pioners doe as much before him, who open the way for him, and with their bodies shelter him, for poore six-pence a day, and happily for lesse?

*—non quicquid turbida Roma  
Elevet, accedas, examénque improbum in illa  
Castiges trutinâ, nec te quæsieris extrâ.*

—PERS. Sat. i. 5.

If troublous Rome set ought at naught, make you  
not one,

Nor chastise you unjust examination  
In balance of their lode:  
Nor seeke your selfe abroad.

We call that a magnifying of our name, to extend and disperse the same in many mouthes, we will have it to be received in good part, and that it's increase redound to his benefit: This is al that is most excusable in it's desseigne: But the infirmity of it's excesse proceeds so farre, that many labour to have the world



## THE SECOND BOOKE

speake of them, howsoever it be. *Tregus Pempeius* CHAPTER  
saith of *Herostratus*, and *Titus Livius* of *Manlius* XVI  
*Capitolinus*, that they were more desirous of great, Of Glory  
then good reputation. It is an ordinary fault; we  
endeavour more that men should speake of us, then  
how and what they speake, and it sufficeth us, that  
our name run in mens mouthes, in what manner so-  
ever. It seemeth that to be known, is in some sort,  
to have life and continuance in other mens keeping.  
As for me, I hold that I am but in my selfe; and  
of this other life of mine, which consisteth in the  
knowledge of my friends, being simply and barely  
considered in my selfe, well I wot, I neither feele  
fruite or jovissance of it, but by the vanity of fantas-  
ticall opinion. And when I shall be dead, I shall  
much lesse have a feeling of it: And shall absolutely  
lose the use of true utilities, which sometimes acci-  
dentally follow it: I shall have no more fastnesse to  
take hold on reputation; nor whereby it may either  
concerne or come unto mee. For, to expect my  
name should receive it: First I have no name that  
is sufficiently mine: Of two I have, the one is com-  
mon to all my race, yea and also to others. There  
is a family at *Paris*, and another at *Montpellier*,  
called *Montaigne*, another in *Britany*, and one in  
*Xaintogne*, surnamed *dela-Montaigne*. The removing  
of one onely syllable may so confound our webbe, as  
I shall have a share in their glory, and they perhaps  
a part of my shame. And my Ancestors have here-  
to-fore beene surnamed *Higham*, or *Eyquem*, a sur-  
name which also belongs to a house well known in  
*England*. As for my other name, it is any bodies  
that shall have a mind to it. So shall I happily  
honour a Porter in my stead. And suppose I had a  
particular marke or badge for my selfe, what can it  
marke when I am no more extant? May it desseigne  
or favour inanity?

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVI  
Of Glory

—*nunc levior cippus non imprimit ossa ?  
Laudat posteritas, nunc non è manibus illis,  
Nunc non è tumulo fortunæque favillâ  
Nascuntur violæ ?* —*Ibid.* 37.

Doth not the grave-stone on such bones sit light?  
Posterity applaudes: from such a spright,  
From such a tombe, from ashes blessed so,  
Shall there not violets (in Cart-lodes) grow?

But of this I have spoken elsewhere. As for the rest, in a whole battell, where ten thousand are either maymed or slaine, there are not peradventure fifteene that shall be much spoken off. It must be some eminent greatnes, or important consequence, that fortune hath joyned unto it, to make a private action prevaile, not of a meane shot alone, but of a chieftaine: For, to kill a man, or two, or tenne; for one to present himselfe undantedly to death, is indeed something to every one of us in particular; for, a mans free-hold goes on it: But in regarde of the world, they are such ordinary things, so many are daily seene, and so sundry alike must concurre together to produce a notable effect, that wee can looke for no particular commendation by them.

—*casus multis hic cognitus, ac jam  
Tritus, et è medio fortunæ ductus acervo.*  
—*JUVEN. Sat. xiii. 9.*

This case is knowne of many, worne with nothing,  
Drawne from the midle heape of fortunes doting.

Of so many thousands of worthie-valiant men, which fifteene hundred yeares since have died in *France*, with their weapons in hand, not one hundred have come to our knowledge: The memory not onely of the Generals and Leaders, but also of the battells and victories lieth now low-buried in oblivion. The fortunes of more then halfe the world, for want of a register, stirre not from their place, and vanish away without continuance. Had I all the unknowne events



## THE SECOND BOOKE

in my possession, I am perswaded I might easily supplant those that are knowne in all kindes of examples. What? Of the Romanes themselves, and of the Grecians, amongst so many writers and testimonies, and so infinit rare exploits and matchles examples: How are so few of them come to our notice?

CHAPTER  
XVI

Of Glory

*Ad nos vix tenuis famæ perlabitur aura.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vii. 646.

Scarcely to us doth passe  
Famæ thin breath, how it was.

It shall be much, if a hundred yeares hence, the civill warres which lately we have had in *France*, be but remembred in grosse. The Lacedemonians as they were going to their battles, were wont to sacrifice unto the Muses, to the end their deedes might be well written, and worthily registred; deeming it a divine favor, and unusuall grace, that noble actions might finde testimonies able to give them life and memory. Thinke we that at every shot that hits us, or at every dangerous attempt we runne into, to have a Clarke present to enrole it: And besides, it may be, that a hundred Clarkes shall write them, whose Commentaries shall not continue three daies, and shall never come to any bodies sight. We have but the thousandth part of ancient writings: It is Fortune, which according to her favor gives them either shorter or longer life; and what we have, we may lawfully doubt-of, whether it be the worse, since we never saw the rest. Histories are not written upon every small trifle: It is requisite that a man have beene conqueror of an Empire, or of a Kingdome; a man must have obtained two and fiftie set battles, and ever with a lesser number, as *Cæsar* was and did. Tenne thousand good-fellowes, and many great Captaines have died most valiantly



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER <sup>XVI</sup> and coragiously in pursuite of her, whose names  
have continued no longer then their wives and  
Of Glory children lived :

—*quos fama obscura recondit.*

—VIRG. *Aen.* v. 292.

Whom fame obscure before  
Layes up in unknowne store.

Even of those, whom we see to doe excellently well, if they have but once continued so three months, or so many yeares, there is no more speech of them, then if they had never bin. Whosoever shall in due measure proportion, and impartially consider, of what kinde of people, and of what deedes the glory is kept in the memory of bookes, he shall finde, there are few actions, and very few persons, that may justly pretend any right in them. How many vertuous men have we seene to survive their owne reputation, who even in their presence have seen the honor and glorie, which in their young daies, they had right-justly purchased, to be cleane extinguished? *And doe we for three yeares of this fantastick and imaginarie life, lose and forgoe our right and essentiall life, and engage our selves in a perpetuall death?* The wiser sort propose a right-fairer, and much more just end unto themselves, to so urgent and weighty an enterprise. *Rectè facti, fecisse merces est: Officii fructus, ipsum officium est* (SENEC. *Epist.* lxxxix.). *The reward of well doing, is the doing, and the fruit of our duty, is our duty.* It might peradventure be excusable in a Painter, or other artificer, or also in a Rhetorician, or Gramarian, by his labours to endeavor to purchase a name: But the actions of vertue are themselves too-too noble, to seeke any other reward, then by their own worth and merit, and especially to seeke it in the vanity of mans judgement. If this false-fond opinion doe

## THE SECOND BOOKE

notwithstanding serve and stead a common wealth to hold men in their dutie: If the people be thereby stirred up to vertue: If Princes be any way touched, to see the world blesse and commend the memorie of *Trajan*, and detest the remembrance of *Nero*: If that doth moove them, to see the name of that arch-villaine, heretofore so dreadfull and so much redoubted of all, so boldly cursed, and so freely outraged, by the first scholer that undertakes him. Let it hardly be increased, and let us (as much as in us lieth) still foster the same amongst ourselves. And *Plato* employing all meanes to make his Citizens vertuous, doth also perswade them, not to contemne the peoples good estimation. And saith that through some divine inspiration it commeth to passe, that even the wicked know often, as well by word, as by opinion, how to distinguish justly the good from the bad. This man together with his master, are woonderfull and bold workemen, to joyne divine operations and revelations, wheresoever humane force faileth. And therefore did perverture *Timon* (deeming thereby to wrong him) surname him the great forger of miracles. *Ut tragici poetae confugiunt ad Deum, cum explicare argumenti exitum non possunt* (Cic. Nat. Deor. i.). As Poets that write Tragedies have recourse to some God, when they cannot unfold the end of their argument. Since men by reason of their insufficiencie cannot well pay themselves with good lawfull coine, let them also employ false mony. This meane hath beene practised by all the law-givers: And there is no common wealth where there is not some mixture either of ceremonious vanity or of false opinion, which as a restraint serveth to keepe the people in awe and dutie. It is therefore, that most of them have such fabulous grounds and trifling beginnings, and enriched with supernaturall mistyries. It is that which

CHAPTER  
XVI

Of Glory



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVI  
Of Glory

hath given credit unto adulterate and unlawfull religions, and hath induced men of understanding to favour and countenance them. And therefore did *Numa* and *Sertorius*, to make their men have a better believe, feed them with this foppery; the one, that the Nymph *Egeria*, the other that his white Hinde, brought him all the counceils he tooke from the Gods. And the same authoritie, which *Numa* gave his lawes under the title of this Goddesses patronage, *Zoroastres* Law-giver to the Bactrians and Persians, gave it to his, under the name of the God *Oromazis*: *Trismegistus* of the Egyptians, of *Mercury*: *Zamolxis* of the Scythians, of *Vesta*: *Charondas* of the Chalcedonians, of *Saturne*: *Minos* of the Candiots, of *Jupiter*: *Licurgus* of the Lacedemonians, of *Apollo*: *Dracon* and *Solon* of the Athenians, of *Minerva*. And every common wealth hath a God to her chiefe: al others falsly, but that truly, which *Moses* instituted for the people of *Jewry* descended from *Ægypt*. The Bedoins religion (as saith the Lord of *Jovinuile*) held among other things that his soule which among them all died for his Prince went directly into another more happy body, much fairer and stronger than the first: by means whereof, they much more willingly hazarded their lives for his sake.

*In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces  
Mortis: et ignavum est reditura parcere vitæ.*

—LUCA. i. 461.

Those men sword minded, can death entertaine,  
Thinke base to spare the life that turnes againe.

Loe here, although very vaine, a most needfull doctrine, and profitable believe. Everie Nation hath store of such examples in it selfe. But this subject would require a severall discourse. Yet to say a word more concerning my former purpose: I doe



## THE SECOND BOOKE

not counsell Ladies any longer to call their duty, **CHAPTER**  
honour: *ut enim consuetudo loquitur, id solum dicitur* **XVI**  
*honestum, quod est populari famâ gloriosum* (Cic. **Of Glory**  
*Fin. ii.*): *For as custome speakes, that only is called*  
*honest which is glorious by popular report.* Their  
duty is the marke; their honour but the barke of it.  
Nor doe I perswade them to give us this excuse of  
their refusall, in payment; for I suppose, their in-  
tentions, their desire, and their will, which are parts  
wherein honour can see nothing, forasmuch as  
nothing appeareth outwardly there, are yet more  
ordered then the effects.

*Quæ, quia non liceat, non facit, illa facit.*

—OVID. *Am.* iii. *El.* iv. 4.

She doth it, though she do it not,  
Because she may not doe't (God wot.)

The offence both toward God, and in conscience,  
would be as great to desire it, as to effect the same.  
Besides they are in themselves actions secret and  
hid; it might easily be, they would steale some one  
from others knowledge, whence honour dependeth,  
had they no other respect to their duty, and affection,  
which they beare unto chastity, in regard of it selfe.  
*Each honorable person chuseth rather to lose his*  
*honour, then to forgoe his conscience.*

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

### *Of Presumption*

#### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption



HERE is another kind of glory, which is an over-good opinion we conceive of our worth. It is an inconsiderate affection, wherewith wee cherish our selves, which presents us unto our selves other then we are. As an amorous passion addeth beauties, and lendeth graces to the subject it embraceth, and maketh such as are therewith possessed, with a troubled conceit, and distracted Judgement, to deeme what they love, and finde what they affect, to bee other, and seeme more perfect, then in trueth it is. Yet would I not have a man, for feare of offending in that point, to mis-acknowledge himselfe, nor thinke to bee lesse then hee is: A true Judgement should wholly and in every respect maintaine his right. It is reason, that as in other things, so in this subject he see what truth presenteth unto him. If he be *Cæsar*, let him hardly deeme himselfe the greatest Captaine of the world. We are nought but ceremonie; ceremonie doth transport us, and wee leave the substance of things; we hold-fast by the boughs, and leave the trunke or body. Wee have taught Ladies to blush, onely by hearing that named, which they nothing feare to doe. Wee dare not call our members by their proper names, and feare not to employ them in all kind of dissolutenesse. Ceremonie forbids us by words to expresse lawfull and naturall things; and we beleieve it. Reason willeth us to doe no bad or unlawfull things, and no man giveth credit unto it. Here I find my selfe entangled in the lawes of Ceremonie, for it neither allowes a man to speake

## THE SECOND BOOKE

ill or good of himselfe. Therefore will wee leave her at this time. Those whom fortune (whether we shall name her good or bad) hath made to passe their life in some eminent or conspicuous degree, may by their publike actions witnesse what they are; but those whom she never employed, but in base things, and of whom no man shall ever speake, except themselves doe it, they are excusable, if they dare speake of themselves to such as have interest in their acquaintance, after the example of *Lucilius*:

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

*Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim  
Credebat libris: neque si male, cesserat usquam,  
Decurrens aliò, neque si bene: quo fit, ut omnis  
Fotivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ  
Vita senis.*—*Hon. Ser. ii. Sat. i. 30.*

He trusted to his booke, as to his trusty friend  
His secrets, nor did he to other refuge bend,  
How ever well, or ill, with him his fortune went,  
Hence is it, all the life is scene the old man spent,  
As it were in a Table noted,  
Which were unto some God devoted.

This man committed his actions and imaginations to his paper, and as he felt, so he pourtraied himselfe. *Nec id Rutilio et Scauro citra fidem, aut obtrectationi fuit* (CORN. TACIT. *Vit. Jul. Agric.*). Nor was that without credit, or any imputation to Rutilius or Scaurus. I remember then, that even from my tenderest infancy, some noted in me a kind of I know not what fashion in carrying of my body and gestures, witnessing a certaine vaine and foolish fiercenesse. This I will first say of it, that it is not inconvenient to have condition so peculiar, and propensions so incorporated in us, that we have no meane to feele, or way to know them. And of such naturall inclinations, unknowne to us, and without our consent, the body doth easily retaine some signe or impression. It was an affectation witting of his beauty, which



## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

The other, not sufficiently to esteeme of  
the one, first me thinkes, these considera-  
somewhat to be accompted of. I feele  
urcharged with one errour of the mind,  
as bad, and much more as importunate. I  
like. I endeavour to correct it; but I  
place it. It is, because I abate the just  
use things, which I possesse; and enhance  
of things, by how much they are more  
sent and not mine owne. This humor  
selfe very farre, as doth the prerogative of  
rity, wherewith husbands looke upon their  
es with a vicious disdain, and many fathers  
r children: So doe I, and between two like  
could I ever weigh against mine. Not so  
hat the jealousie of my preferment, and  
ent troubleth my judgement, and hindereth  
a pleasing my selfe, as that mastery her self  
a contempt of that which a man possesseth  
eth. Policies, far customes and tongues flatter  
d I perceive the Latine tongue by the favour  
dignity to deceive me, beyond what belongs  
r, as children and the vulgar sort. My neigh-  
oeconomic; his house, and his horse, though  
equall value, is more worth then mine, by how  
more it is not mine owne. Besides, because I  
ost ignorant in mine owne matters: I admire  
surance, and wonder at the promise, that every  
hath of himselfe: whereas there is almost  
ng, that I wot I know, nor that I dare warrant  
life to be able to doe. I have not my faculties  
position, or by estate, and am not instructed in  
but after the effect: As doubtfull of mine  
strength, as uncertaine of anothers force.  
nce it followeth, if commendably I chance upon  
one piece of worke, I rather impute it to my  
ne, then ascribe it to mine industry; forasmuch

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

as I designe them all to hazard, and in feare. Likewise I have this in generall, that of all the opinions, which Antiquity hath had of men in grose, those which I most willingly embrace, and whereon I take most hold, are such as most vilifie, contemne, and annihilate us. Me thinks Philosophy hath never better cardes to Shew, then when she checketh our presumption, and crosseth our vanity; when in good sooth she acknowledgeth her irresolution, her weakness and her ignorance. Me seemeth the over good conceit, and selfe-weening opinion man hath of himselfe, is the nurse-mother of the falsest opinions, both publike and particular. Those which a cocke-horse will pearch themselves upon the *Epicicle of Mercury*, and see so farre into heaven, they even pull out my teeth. For in the study which I professe, the subject whereof is Man, finding so extreme a varietie of judgements, so inextricable a labyrinth of difficulties one upon the necke of another, so great diversitie, and so much uncertaintie, yea even in the Schoole of wisdom it selfe: you may imagine since those men could never be resolved of the knowledge of themselves and of their owne condition, which is continually before their eyes, which is ever within them; since they know not how that moveth, which themselves cause to move, nor how to set forth the springs, and decipher the wards, which themselves hold and handle, how should I thinke of the true cause of the flux and reflux of the river *Nilus*? The curiosity to know things hath beene given to men (as saith the holy Scripture) for a scourge. But to come to my particular, it is very hard (mee seemeth) that some other regardeth himselfe lesse, yea and some other esteemeth me lesse then I esteeme my selfe. I accompt my selfe of the common sort except in that I deeme my selfe guiltie of the basest, and culpable [of the]

## THE SECOND BOOKE

most popular defects: but not disavowed nor excused. And I only prise my selfe, wherein I know my worth. If any glory be in me, it is but superficially infused into me; by the treason of my complexion: and hath no solide body appearing to the sight of my judgement. I am but sprinkled over, but not throughly dyed. For in truth, touching the effects of the spirit, in what manner soever, there never came any thing from me, that contented me. And others approbation is no currant payment for me. My judgement is tender and hard especially in mine owne behalf. I feele my self to waver and bend through weaknesse: I have nothing of mine owne to satisfie my judgement. My sight is indifferently cleare and regular; but if I take any serious worke in hand, it is troubled and dimmed: as I perceive most evidently in Poesie: I love it exceedingly: I have some insight or knowledge in other mens Labours, but in truth I play the Novice when I set my hand unto it: Then can I not abide my selfe. A man may play the foole every where else, but not in Poesie.

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

—*mediocribus esse poetis*  
*Non dū, non homines, non concessere columnæ.*  
—HOR. *Art. Poet.* 372.

Nor Gods, nor men, nor pillars gave the graunt,  
That Poets in a meane, should meanelly chaunt.

I would to God this sentence were found in the front of our Printers or Stationers shops, to hinder the entrance of so many bald-rimers.

—*verum*  
*Nil securius est malo Poeta.* MART. xii. *Epig.* lxiv.

Nothing securer may be had,  
Then is a Poet bold and bad.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

Why have we no such people? *Dionysius* the father esteemed nothing in himselfe so much as his poesie. In the times of the Olimpique games, with chariots exceeding all other in magnificence, he also sent Poets and Musicians to present his verses, with tents and pavilions gilt and most sumptuously tapistred. When they first beganne to rehearse them, the favour and excellencie of the pronounciation did greatly allure the peoples attention: but when they beganne to consider the fondnesse of the composition, they fell as soone to contemne them: and being more and more exasperated fell furiously into an uprore, and headlong ranne in most spitefull manner to teare and cast downe all his pavillions. And forasmuch as his rich chariots did no good at all in their course, and the ship which carried his men, returning homeward missed the shore of *Sicilie*, and was by violent stormes driven and split upon the coast of *Tarentum*, they certainly beleevd, the wrath of the Gods to have beene the cause of it, as being greatly offended, both against him, and his vile and wicked Poeme: yea and the Mariners themselves that escaped the shipwracke did much second the peoples opinion: to which the Oracle that foretold his death seemed in some sort to subscribe: which implied, that *Dionysius* should be neare his end, at what time he had vanquished those that should be of more worth than himselfe: Which he interpreted to be the Carthaginians, who exceeded him in might. And having at any time occasion to fight or grapple with them, that he might not incurre the meaning of his prediction, he would often temper and avoide the victorie. But he mis-understood the matter, for the God observed the time of advantage, when as through partiall favour and injustice he obtained the victory over the tragickall Poets at *Athens*, who were much better

## THE SECOND BOOKE

than he was, where he caused in contention of them, his Tragedie, entituled the *Leneiens*, to be publikely acted. After which usurped victorie, he presently deceased: And partly through the excessive joy, he thereby conceived. What I finde excusable in mine, is not of it selfe and according to truth: but in comparison of other compositions, worse then mine, to which I see some credit given. I envie the good happe of those, which can applaude and gratifie themselves by their owne labours; for it is an easie matter for one to please himselfe, since he drawes his pleasure from himselfe: Especially if one be somewhat constant in his owne wilfulnesse. I know a Poetaster, gainst whom both weake and strong, in company and at home, both heaven and earth, affirme and say, he hath no skill or judgement in Poesie, who for all that is nothing dismaied, nor will not abate one jote of that measure whereunto he hath fitted himselfe; but is ever beginning againe, ever consulting anew, and alwaies persisting; by so much the more fixed in his opinion, by how much the more it concerneth him alone, and he only is to maintaine it. My compositions are so farre from applauding me, that as many times as I looke them over so often am I vexed at them.

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

*Cum relego, scripsisse pudet, quia plurima cerno,  
Me quoque qui feci, judice, digna lini.*

—OVID, *Pont.* i. c. vi. 15.

When I re-read, I shame I write; for much I see,  
My selfe, who made them, being judge, blotted to be.

I have ever an Idea in my mind, which presents me with a better forme, then that I have alreadie framed, but I can neither lay hold on it, nor effect it. Yet is that Idea but of the meaner stamp. I thereby conclude, that the productions of those rich and great mindes of former ages, are farre beyond



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

the extreame extention of my wish and imagination. Their compositions doe not only satisfie and fill me, but they astonish and wrap me into admiration. I judge of their beauty, I see it, if not to the end, at least so farre as it is impossible for me to aspire unto it. Whatsoever I undertake (as *Plutarke* saith of one) I owe a sacrifice to the Graces, hoping thereby to gaine their favour.

—*si quid enim placet,  
Si quid dulce hominum, sensibus influit,  
Debentur lepidis omnia gratis.*

If ought doe please, if any sweet  
The sense of men with pleasures greet,  
To thanke the Graces it is meet.

They altogether forsake me: What I doe, it is but bunglingly, and wants both polishing and beauty. I can rate them at no higher value, then they are worth. My workmanship addeth no grace unto the matter. And that's the reason I must have it strong, with good holdfast, and shining of it selfe. If I chance to seize on any popular and more gay, it is to follow me, who love not a ceremonious prudence and gloomy wisdom, as doth the world; and to glad my selfe, not my stile, who would rather have it grave and severe: If at least I may call that a stile, which is a formelesse and abrupt speech; A popular gibbrish, and a proceeding without definition, without partition, and sans conclusion, troubled as that of *Amasianus*, and *Rabirius*. I can neither please, nor glad, nor tickle. The best tale in the world comming into my hands, becomes withered and tarnished. I cannot speake but in good earnest, and am altogether barren of that facility which I see in many of my companions, to entertaine [first comers] to keep a whole troupe in talk, to amuse a Princes eares with all manner of discourses and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

never to be weary, and never to want matter, by reason of the graces they have in applying their first approches, and fitting them to the humour and capacity of those they have to do withall. Princes love not greatly serious and long discourses, nor I to tell tales. The first and easiest reasons (which are commonly the best taken) I can neither employ nor make use of them. I am an ill Orator to the common sort. I speake the utmost I know of all matters. *Cicero* thinks, in discourses of Philosophy, the exordium to be the hardest part: If it be so, I wisely lay hold on the conclusion. Yet should a man know how to turne his strings to all aires: And the sharpest comes ever [least] in play. There is at [least] as much perfection in raising up an empty, as to uphold a weighty thing: A man must sometimes handle matters but superficially, and at other times dive into them. I wot well that most men keep themselves on this low stage, because they conceive not of things but by the outward shew. I also know, that the greatest *Clarkes*, yea *Xenophon* and *Plato*, are often seene to yeeld to this low and popular fashion, in speaking of matters, upholding it with those graces, which they never want. As for the rest, my language hath neither facility nor fluency in it, but is harsh and sharpe, having free and unsinnowy dispositions. And so it liketh me, if not by my judgement, yet by my inclination. But yet I perceive that sometimes I wade too farre into it, and that forcing my selfe to avoid art and affectation, I fall into it another way.

—*brevia esse labore*  
*Obscurus fio.*—*Hon. Art. Poet.* 25.  
 To be short labour I  
 I darker grow thereby.

*Plato* saith, that either long or short, are not properties, that either diminish or give price unto speech.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Presumption

If I should undertake to follow this other smoothe, even and regular stile, I should never attaine unto it. And although the cadences, and breakings of *Salust*, doe best agree with my humour, yet do I finde *Cæsar* both greater, and lesse easie to be represented. And if my inclination doth rather carrie mee to the imitation of *Senecaes* stile, I omit not to esteeme *Plutark* much more. As well in silence as in speech, I am simply my naturall forme, whence happily ensueth, that I am more in speaking than in writing. The motions and actions of the body, give life unto words, namely in them that move roundly and without affectation, as I doe, and that will be earnest. Behaviour, the face, the voice, the gowne, and the place, may somewhat endear those things, which in themselves are but meane, as prating. *Messala* complaineth in *Tacitus* of certaine strait garments used in his time, and discommendeth the fashion of the benches whereon the Orators were to speak, saying, they weakened their eloquence. My French tongue is corrupted both in the pronuntiation, and else-where by the barbarisme of my country. I never saw man of these hither-countries, that did not evidently taste of his home-speech, and who often did not wound those eares, that are purely French. Yet is it not because I am so cunning in my *Perigordin*: For I have no more use of it, than of the Dutch, nor doe I greatly care. It is a language (as are many others round about me) like to that of *Poitou*, *Xaintogne*, *Angoulesme*, *Limosin*, and *Auvergne*, squattering, dragling, and filthie. There is about us, toward the mountaines, a Gascoine tongue, which I much commend and like, sinnowie, pithie, short, significant, and in truth man-like and military, more than any other I understand. As compendious, powerfull, and pertinent as the French is



## THE SECOND BOOKE

gracious, delicate, and copious. As for the Latine, which was given me for my mother-tongue, by reason of discontinuance, I have so lost the promptitude of it, as I cannot well make use of it in speech, and scarcely in writing, in which I have heeretofore beene so ready, that I was called a master in it. Loe here my little sufficiencie in that behalfe. *Beauty is a part of great commendation in the commerce and societie of men.* It is the chiefe meane of reconciliation betweene one and other. Nor is there any man so barbarous, and so hard-hearted, that in some sort feeleth not himselfe stricken with her sweetnes. The body hath a great part in our being; and therein keeps a special rancke: For, his structure and composition are worthy due consideration. Such as goe about to sunder our two principall parts, and separat them one from another, are much to blame: They ought rather to be coupled and joyned fast together. The soule must be enjoined not to retire her selfe to her quarter, nor to entertaine herselfe apart, nor to despise and leave the body (which she cannot well doe, except it be by some counterfained, apish tricke) but ought to combine and cling fast unto him, to embrace, to cherish, assist, correct, perswade and advise him, and if hee chance to swarve or stray, then to lead and direct him: In fine, she should wed and serve him in stead of a husband, that so their effects may not seeme contrary and divers, but agreeing and uniforme. Christians have a particular instruction concerning this bond, for they know that Gods justice alloweth this society, and embraceth this conjunction of the body and soule, yea so farre as to make the body capable of everlasting rewards. And that God beholds the whole man to worke, and will have him entirely to receive either the punishment, or the recompence, according to his demerits. The

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

Peripatetike Sect (of all Sects the most sociable) attributeth this onely care unto wisdom, in common to procure and provide, the good of these two associated parts: And declareth other Sects to have partialized overmuch, because they had given themselves to the full consideration of this commixture; this one for the body, this other for the soule, with one like error and oversight, and had mistaken their subject, which is Man; and their guide, which in generall they avouched to be Nature. The first distinction, that hath beene amongst men, and the first consideration, that gave preheminences to some over others, it is very likely it was the advantage of beauty.

—*agros divisere atque dedere*  
*Pro facie cujusque et viribus ingenioque :*  
*Nam facies multum valuit, virisque vigeant.*

—LUCR. v. 1120.

They lands divided and to each man shared  
As was his face, his strength, his wit compared,  
For face and strength were then  
Much prized amongst men.

I am of a stature somewhat under the meane. This default hath not only uncomlinesse in it, but also incommoditie: Yea even in those which have charge and commandement over others; For, the authoritie which a faire presence and corporall majestie endoweth a man withal is wanting. *Caius Marius* did not willingly admit any Souldiers in his bands, that were not six foot high. The Courtier hath reason to require an ordinary stature in the Gentleman he frameth, rather, than any other: and to avoid all strangenesse that may make him to be pointed-at: But if he misse of this mediocritie, to chuse that he rather offend in lownes, then in tallnes. I would not do it in a militarie man. Little men (saith *Aristotle*) are indeed pretie, but not beauteous,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

nor goodly : and in greatnes, is a great soule knowne, as is beautie in a great and high body. The Ethiopians and Indians (saith he) in chusing of their Kings and Magistrates, had an especiall regard to the beautie and tallnes of the persons. They had reason, for it breedeth an awfull respect in those that follow him, and a kind of feare in his enemies, to see a goodly, tall and handsome man march as chiefe and Generall in the head of any armie, or front of a troupe :

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

*Ipsæ inter primas præstanti corpore Turnus  
Vertitur, arma tenens, et tota vertice supra est.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vii. 725.

*Turnus*, a goodly man, mongst them that led,  
Stood arm'd, then all they higher by the head.

Our great, divine and heavenly King, al whose circumstances ought with much care, religion and reverence to be noted and observed, hath not refused the bodie commendation. *Speciosus formâ præ filiis hominum* (*Psal.* xlv. 3). *In favor beautiful above the sonnes of men.* And *Plato* wisheth beautie to be joyned unto temperance and fortitude in the preservers of his Commonwealth. Is it not a great spite, if being amongst your owne servants, a stranger commeth to your selfe to aske you where your Lord or Master is? And that you have nothing but the remainder of a capping, which is as well put off to your Barber, or to your Secretarie? As it happened to poore *Philopæmen*, who having left his company behind, and comming alone into a house where he was expresly looked-for, his hostes who knew him not, and saw him to be so il-favored a fellow, employed him to helpe her maides draw water, and to mend the fire for the service of *Philopæmen*. The Gentlemen of his traine being come and finding him so busily at worke (for he failed not to fulfil his hostesses commandement) enquired of



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

him what he did, who answered, *I pay the penaltie of my unhandsomnesse.* Other beauties are for women. The beautie of a handsome comely tallnesse is the only beautie of men. Where lownesse and littlenesse is, neither the largenesse or roundnesse of a forehead nor the whitenes or lovelinesse of the eyes, nor the pretty fashion of a nose, nor the slendernes of the eare, littlenesse of the mouth, order and whitenesse of teeth, smooth thicknesse of a beard, browne like a chesse-nut, well-curved and upstanding haire, just proportion of the head, freshnes of colour, the cheereful aspect of a pleasing face, the sweet-smelling of a body, nor the well decorated composition of all limmes, can make a handsome beautilous man. As for me, I am of a strong and well compacted stature, my face is not fat but full, my complexion betweene joviall and melancholy, indifferently sanguine and hot.

*Unde rigent setis mihi crura, et pectora villis :*

—MART. vi. *Epig.* lvi. 1.

Whereby my legs and brest,  
With rough haire are opprest.

My health is blith and lustie, though well-stroken in age, seldome troubled with diseases : Such I was, for I am now engaged in the approches of age, having long since past over forty yeares.

—*minutatim vires et robur adultum  
Frangit, et in partem pejorem liquitur ætas.*

—LUCR. ii. 1140.

By little and a little age breakes strength,  
To worse and worse declining melt at length.

What hereafter I shall be, will be but halfe a being, I shall be no more my selfe. I daily escape, and still steale my selfe from my selfe :

*Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes.*

—HOR. ii. *Epist.* ii. 55.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

Yeares as they passe away,  
Of all our things make pray.

### CHAPTER XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

Of addressing, dexteritie, and disposition, I never had any, yet am I the son of a well disposed father, and of so blithe and merry a disposition, that it continued with him even to his extreamest age. He seldome found any man of his condition, and that could match him in all exercises of the body; As I have found few, that have not out-gon me, except it were in running, wherein I was of the middle sort. As for musicke, were it either in voice, which I have most harsh, and very unapt, or in instruments, I could never be taught any part of it. As for dancing, playing at tennis, or wrestling; I could never attaine to any indifferent sufficiencie; but none at all in swimming, in fencing, in vaulting, or in leaping. My hands are so stiffe and nummie, that I can hardly write for my selfe, so that what I have once scribled, I had rather frame it a new, than take the paines to correct it; and I reade but little better. I perceive how the auditorie censureth me: Otherwise I am no bad clarke. I cannot very wel close up a letter; nor could I ever make a pen. I was never good carver at the table. I could never make readie nor arme a Horse: Nor handsomely array a Hawke upon my fist, nor cast her off, or let her flie, nor could I ever speake to Dogges, to Birds, or to Horses. The conditions of my body are, in fine, very well agreeing with those of my minde, wherein is nothing lively; but onely a compleate and constant vigor. I endure labour and paine, yet not very well, unlesse I carry my selfe unto it, and no longer than my desire leadeth and directeth me.

*Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem.*

—*Ser. li. Sa. li. 12.*

While earnestnesse for sport or gaine,  
Sweetly deceiv's the sowrest paine.

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

Otherwise, if by any pleasure I be not allured, and if I have other direction, than my genuine and free will, I am nothing worth, and I can never fadge well: For I am at such a stay, that except for health and life, there is nothing I will take the paines to fret my selfe about, or will purchase at so high a rate, as to trouble my wits for it, or to be constrained thereunto.

—*Tanti mihi non sit opaci  
Omnis arena Tagi, quodque in mare volvitur aurum.*  
—JUVEN. *Sat.* iii. 54.

So much I weigh not shadow *Tagus* sande,  
Nor gold that roules into the sea from land.

I am extreamele lazie and idle, and exceedingly free, both by nature and art. I would as willingly lend my blood as my care. I have a minde free and altogether her owne; accustomed to follow her owne humor. And to this day never had nor commanding nor forced master. I have gon as farre, and kept what pace pleased me best. Which hath enfeebled and made me unprofitable to serve others, and made me fit and apt but onely for my selfe. And as for me, no man ever needed to force this heavie, lither, and idle nature of mine: For, having even from my birth found my selfe in such a degree of fortune, I have found occasion to stay there: (An occasion notwithstanding, that a thousand others of mine acquaintance would have taken as a plancke to passe over to search, to agitation and to unquietnes.) And as I have sought for nothing, so have I taken nothing.

*Non agimur tumidis ventis Aquilone secundo,  
Non tamen adversis ætatem ducimus austris:  
Viribus, ingenio, specie, virtute, loco, re,  
Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores.*  
—HOR. ii. *Epist.* ii. 201.

With full sailes, prosp'rous winde, we do not drive,  
Nor yet with winde full in our teeth doe live.  
In strength, in wit, in vertue, shape, goods, place,  
Last of the first, before the last we pace.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

I have had no need but of sufficiencie to content my selfe: Which being well taken is ever a regiment for the mind, equally difficult in all sorts of condition; and which by use, we see more easily found in want, than in plenty; peradventure, because that according to the course of our other passions, the greedinesse of riches is more sharpened by their uses than by their need: and the vertue of moderation more rare, than that of patience. And I have had no need, but to enjoy those goods quietly, which God of his bounty had bestowed upon me. I have tasted no kinde of tedious trouble. I have seldome managed other than mine owne businesse: Or if I have, it hath been upon condition, I might do it at my leisure, and according to my will, committed unto me, by such as trusted me, and knew me well, and would not importune me; For, the skilfull rider, wil reape some service of a restie and wind-broken jade. My very Childehood hath beene directed by a soft, milde, gentle, and free fashion, and ever exempted from rigorous subjection. Al which hath endowed me with a delicate kinde of complexion, and made me incapable of any care: So that I love, men should conceale my losses from me, and the disorders which concerne me. In the Chapter of my charges and expences, I have set downe what my negligence or carelesnesse costs me, both to feed and entertaine my selfe.

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

—*hec nempe supersunt,  
Quæ dominum fallant, quæ proximi furibus.*  
—*Hon. i. Epist. vi. 45.*

This remnant of accompts I have,  
Which may deceive Lords, help a Knave.

I love not to know an accompt of what I have, that I may lesse exactly feele my losses: I desire those that live with me, where they want affection, or good effects, to cozen and pay me with good



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

apparances. For want of sufficient constancy to endure the importunity of contrary or crosse accidents, whereunto we are subject; and because I cannot alwaies keepe my selfe prepared to governe and order my affaires, as much as I am able, I foster this opinion in me, relying wholly upon fortune, and ready to take every thing at the worst, and resolve to beare that worst, mildely and patiently. About that only doe I busie my selfe, and to that end do I direct all my discourses. In any dangerous matter, I care not so much how I may avoide it, and how little it importeth whether I avoide it or no; And what were it if I would continue in it? Being unable to direct events, I governe my selfe; and if they apply not themselves to me, I apply my selfe to them: I have no great art to shunne fortune, and how to scape or force it, and with wisdom to addresse matters to my liking: I have also lesse sufferance to endure the sharpe and painefull care, which belongeth to that. And the most toilesome state for me, is to be doubtful in matters of weight, and agitated between feare and hope. To deliberate, be it but in slight matters, doth importune me. And I feel my spirit more perplexed to suffer the motions of doubt, and shakings of consultation, than to be settled and resolved about any accident whatsoever, after the chance is once cast. Fewe passions have troubled my sleepe; but of deliberations the least doth trouble it. Even as of highwaies, I willingly seeke to avoid the downe-hanging, and slippery, and take the beaten-path, though myrie, and deepe, so I may go no lower, and there seeke I safety: So love I pure mishaps, and which exercise and turmoile me no more, after the uncertaintie of their mending: And which even at the first cast, drive me directly into sufferance.

—*dubia plus torquent mala.*

—SEN. *Agam.* act iii. sc. i. 29.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Evils yet in suspence,  
Doe give us more offence.

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

In events, I carry my selfe man-like ; in the conduct childishly. The horror of a fall doth more hurt me, than the blow. The play is not worth the candle. The covetous man hath a worse reckoning of his passion, than the poore ; and the jealous man, than the cuckold. And it is often lesse harme for one to loose his farme, than pleade and wrangle for it : *The slowest march, is the safest.* It is the seate of constancie. Therein you have no need but of your selfe. There she takes her footing and wholly resteth upon her selfe. The example of a Gentleman, whom many have knowne, hath it not some Philosophicall shew ? This man having passed all his youth like a good fellow, a jollie companion, a great talker, and a merry ladd, being now well in yeares, would needes be married. Remembring himselfe how much the subject of cuckoldry had given him cause to speake, and scoffe at others ; to put himselfe under covert-baron, he took him a wife from out that place, where all men may have them for mony, and with her made his aliance : Good morrow Whoore, Good morrow Cuckold. And there is nothing wherewith he oftner and more openly entertain'd such as came unto him, than with this tale ; Whereby he brided the secret pratlings of mockers, and blunted the point of their reproch. Concerning ambition, which is next neighbor or rather daughter to presumption, it had beene needfull (to advance me) that fortune had come to take me by the hand : For to put my selfe into any care for an uncertaine hope, and to submit my selfe to all difficulties, waiting on such as seeke to thrust themselves into credite and reputation, in the beginning of their progresse, I could never have done it.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XVII

### Of Pre- sumption

—*Spem pretio non emo,*

—TER. *Adel.* act ii. sc. 2.

Expeuce of present pay  
For hope, I do not lay.

I fasten my selfe on that which I see and hold and  
go not far from the shore :

*Alter remus aquas, alter tibi radat arenas.*

—PROP. iii. *El.* ii. 23.

Keepe water with one Oare,  
With th' other grate the shore.

Besides, a man seldome comes to these prefer-  
ments, but in hazarding first his own: And I am  
of opinion, if that which a man hath, sufficeth to  
maintaine the condition, wherein he was borne and  
brought up, it is folly to let it goe upon the un-  
certainty of encreasing the same. He to whom  
fortune refuseth meanes to settle his estate and  
establish a quiet and reposed being, is excusable, if  
he cast what he hath at hazard, since thus as well  
as thus, necessitie sends him to shift and search out.

*Capienda rebus in malis preceps via est.*

—SEN. *Agam.* act ii. sc. i. 47.

A headlong course is best,  
When mischiefes are addrest.

And I rather excuse a yonger brother, to make  
sale of his inheritance, than him, who hath the honor  
of his house in charge, who cannot fall into wants  
but through his default: I have by the counsell of  
my good frinds of former times, found the way  
shorter and easier to rid my selfe of this desire and  
keepe my selfe husht :

*Cui sit conditio dulcis, sine pulvere palmae.*

—HOR. i. *Epist.* i. 51.

Who like it well to beare the prise.  
But take no toile in any wise.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

Judging also rightly of my forces, that they were not capable of great matters: And remembring the saying of Lord Oliver, whilome-Chaunceler of France, who said, that French men might be compared to Apes, who climbing up a tree, never cease skipping from bough to bough, till they come to the highest, where they shew their bare tailes.

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

*Turpe est quod nequeas capiti committere pondus,  
Et pressum inflexo max dare terga genu.*

—PROP. iii. Ele. viii. 5.

Tis shame, more than it can well beare, on head to packe,  
And thereby soone oppress't with bended knee flie backe.

Such qualities as are now in me void of reproch, in that age I deemed unprofitable. The facilitie of my maners had been named faintnesse and weaknes; faith and conscience wold have beene thought scrupulous and superstitious; liberty and freedome, importunate, inconsiderate, and rash. Misfortune serveth to some purpose. It is not amiss to be borne in a much depraved age: for in comparison of others, you are judged vertuous, very cheape. In our dayes, he that is but a parricide, or a sacrilegious person, is a man of honesty and honor.

*Nunc si depositum non inficiatur amicus,  
Si reddat veterem cum tota arrugine tollem,  
Prodigiosa fides, et Thuscis digna libellis,  
Quæque coronatâ lustrari debeat a nâ*

—JUVEN. Sat. xiii. 60.

If now a friend deny not what was laid in trust,  
If wholly he restore th' old bellows with their rust:  
A wondrous trust, to be in Chronicles related,  
And should with sacrifice, as strange, be expiated.

And never was there time or place, wherein more assured and great reward was proposed unto Princes for goodnesse and justice. The first that shall be advised, by these meanes to thrust himselfe into

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

favour and credit, I am much deceived if in part of paiment, he get not the start of his fellowes. Force and violence can do very much ; but never all. Wee see Merchants, countrey-Justices, and Artificers to march cheeke by joll with our Nobilitie, in valour, and militarie discipline. They performe honourable combates, both publike and private. They batter and defend Townes and Cities in our present warres. A Prince smothereth his commendation amid this throng. *Let him shine over others with humanitie, with truth, loyaltie, temperance and above all with justice ; markes now adaies rare, unknowne and exiled.* It is only the peoples will, wherewith he may effect what he pleaseth : And no other qualities can allure their will so much as they, as being the profitablest for them. *Nihil est tam popolare quam bonitas : Nothing is so popular as goodnesse is.* By this proportion I had beene a rare great man : As by that of certaine ages past, I am now a pigmey and popular man ; In which it was common, if stronger qualities did not concurre with all, *To see a man temperate in his revenges, milde in revenging of offences, religious in keeping of his word ; neither double, nor over tractable, nor applying his faith to others will, or to every occasion.* I would rather let all affaires go to wracke, than breake my word for their availe. For, touching this new-found vertue of faining and dissimulation, which now is so much in credit, I hate it to the death : and of all vices, I find none that so much witnesseth demissenesse and basenesse of heart. It is a coward and servile humour, for a man to disguise and hide himselfe under a maske, and not dare to shew himselfe as he is. Thereby our men addresse themselves to trecherie : *Being trained to utter false words, they make no conscience to breake them.* A generous minde ought not to belie his thoughts, but make shew of his inmost parts : There al is good, or at least all is

## THE SECOND BOOKE

humane. Aristotle thinkes it an office of magnanimitie to hate and love openly, to judge and speake with all libertie; and never (though the prise of truth goe on it) to make esteeme either of the approbation or reprobation of others. Apollonius said, it was for servants to lie, and for freemen to speake truth. It is the chiefe and fundamentall part of vertue. Shee must be loved for her owne sake. He that speaketh truth, because he is bound to doe so, and for that he serveth: and that feares not to tell a lie, when it little importeth another man, is not sufficiently true. My mind of her own complexion detesteth falshood, and hateth to think on it. I feele an inward bashfulness, and a stinging remorse, if at any time it scape me; as sometimes it doth, if unpremeditated occasions surpise me. A man must not alwaies say all he knowes, for that were follie: But what a man speakes ought to be agreeing to his thoughts, otherwise it is impiety. I know not what benefit they expect, that ever faine, and so uncessantly dissemble; except it be not to be beleaved, even when they speak truly. That may deceive men once or twice, but to make a profession to cary it away smoothly, and as some of our Princes have done, to boast, that if their shirt were privie to their secret and true cogitations, they wold burne it: which was the saying of ancient Metellus Macedonicus; And that he who cannot dissemble, cannot raign, serves but only to warne those who have to deale with them, that what they say is but untruth and dissimulation. *Quo quis versutior et callidior est, hoc invisior et suspectior, detracta opinione probitatis* (Cic. Off. i.). The finer-headed, and more subtle-brained a man is, the more is he hated and suspected, if once the opinion of honesty be taken from him. It were great simplicity for a man to suffer himself to be miss-led either by the lookes or words of him, that outwardly professeth what he is not inwardly, as did

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

*Tiberius.* And I know not what share such people may challenge in the commerce of men, never producing any thing, that may be taken for good payment. *He who is disloyall to truth, is likewise false against lying.* Such as in our daies, in the establishing of a Princes dutie, have only considered the good and felicitie of his affaires, and preferred the same before the respect of his faith and conscience, would say something to a Prince, whose affaires fortune hath so disposed, that with once breaking and falsifying of his word, he might for ever confirme and establish them. But it goeth otherwise. A man may more than once come to such a bargaine. A man during his life concludeth more than one peace or treatie. The commodity or profit that inviteth them to the first disloyalty (and daily some offer themselves; as to all other trecheries) sacrileges, murders, rebellions, treasons, are undertaken for some kinde of profit. But this first gaine brings ever infinite losses and dangers with it: casting this Prince from-out all commerce and meanes of negotiation, by the example of this infidelitie. *Soliman* of the Ottomans race (a race little regarding the keeping of promises or performance of covenants) at what time he caused his Armie to land at *Otranto* (I being then but a childe) having knowne that *Mercurin of Gratinara*, and the inhabitants of *Castro*, were detained prisoners, after the towne was yeelded, contrary to that which by his Captaines had beene capitulated with them, he sent word they should be released, and that having other weighty enterprises in hand in that countrey, such disloyalty, although it had apparance of great and present benefit, yet in time to come it would bring a distrust and reproch of infinite prejudice. As for me, *I had rather be importunate and indiscreet, than a flatterer and a dissembler.* I allow, a

## THE SECOND BOOKE

man may entermingle some point of fiercenesse and wilfulnesse, to keepe himselfe so entire and open as I am, without consideration of others. And mee seemeth I become a little more free, where I should be lesse, and that by the opposition of respect I grow earnest. It may also be, that for want of Art I follow mine owne nature. Presenting to the greater sort the very same licence of speech and boldnes of countenance, that I bring from my house: I perceiue how much it inclineth towards indiscretion and incivilitie. But although I be so fashioned, my spirit is not sufficiently yeelding to avoid a sudden question, or to scape it by some winding, nor to dissemble a truth, nor have I memory able to continue it so fained, nor assurance sufficient to maintaine it; and I play the Braggard through feeblenesse. And therefore I apply my selfe to ingenuitie, and ever to speake truth and what I think, both by complexion and by intention; leaving the successe thereof unto fortune. *Aristippus* said, that the chieftest commoditie he reaped by Philosophy, was, that he spake freely and sincerely to all men: Memory is an instrument of great service, and without which, judgement wil hardly discharge his duty, wherof I have great want. What a man will propose unto me, he must doe it by peece-meales: For, to answer to a discourse that hath many heads, lieth not in my power. I cannot receive a charge, except I have my writing tables about me: and if I must remember a discourse of any consequence, be it of any length, I am driven to this vile and miserable necessitie, to learne every word I must speake by rote; otherwise I should never do it wel or assuredly, for feare my memory should in my greatest need faile me; which is very hard unto me, for I must have three houres to learne three verses. Moreover in any long discourse, the libertie or authoritie to

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

remooove the order, to change a word, uncessantly altering the matter, makes it more difficult to be confirmed in the authors memory. And the more I distrust it, the more it troubleth me. It serveth me better by chance, and I must carelesly sollicite her, for if I urge her, she is astonished; and if it once beginne to waver, the more I sound her, the more entangled and intricate she proveth. She wil wait upon me when she list, not when I please. And what I feele in my memorie, I feele in many other parts of mine. I eschew commandement, duty, and compulsion. What I doe easily and naturally, if I resolve to doe it by expresse and prescribed appointment, I can then doe it no more. Even in my body, those parts, that have some liberty, and more particular jurisdiction, doe sometimes refuse to obey me, if at any time I appoint and enjoin them to doe me some necessarie services. This forced and tyrannicall pre-ordinance doth reject them, and they either for spight or feare shrinke and are quailed. Being once in a place, where it is reputed a barbarous discourtesie not to pledge those that drinke to you, where although I were used with al libertie, in favor of certain Ladies that were in company, according to the fashion of the country, I would needs play the good fellow. But it made us all mery; for the threats and preparation, that I should force my selfe beyond my naturall custome, did in such sort stop, and stuffe my throat, that I was not able to swallow one drop, and was barr'd of drinking all the repast. I found my selfe glutted and ful of drink by the overmuch swilling that my imagination had fore-conceived. This effect is more apparant in those, whose imagination is more vehement and strong: yet it is naturall: and there is no man, but shall sometimes have a feeling of it. An excellent Archer being condemned to death, was



## THE SECOND BOOKE

offered to have his life saved, if he would but shew any notable triall of his profession, refused to make prooffe of it; fearing les the contention of his will should make him to misse-direct his hand, and that in lieu of saving his life, he might also lose the reputation he had gotten in shooting in a bow. A man whose thoughts are busie about other matters, shall very neere within an inch keepe and alwaies hit one selfe same number and measure of paces, in a place where he walketh; but if heedily he endeavour to measure and count them, he shall finde that what he did by nature and chance, he cannot doe it so exactly by desseign. My Library (which for a countrey Library, may passe for a very faire one) is seated in a corner of my house: if any thing come into my minde, that either I must goe seeke or write in it, for feare I should forget it in crossing of my Court, I must desire some other body to remember the same for me. If speaking, I embolden my selfe never so little to digresse from my Discourse, I doe ever lose it; which makes me to keepe my selfe in my speech, forced, neere and close. Those that serve me, I must ever call them, either by their office or countrey: for I finde it very hard to remember names. Well may I say, it hath three syllables, that it's sound is harsh, or that it beginneth or endeth with such a letter. And should I live long, I doubt not but I might forget mine own name, as some others have done heretofore. *Messala Corvinus* lived two yeeres without any memory at all, which is also reported of *George Trapezuncius*. And for mine owne interest, I doe often ruminare what manner of life theirs was, and whether wanting that part, I shall have sufficient to maintaine my selfe in any good sort: which looking neere unto, I feare that this defect, if it be perfect, shall lose all the functions of my soule.

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

*Plenus rimarum sum, hâc atque illâc perfluo.*

—TER. *Eun.* act i. scen. 2.

I am so full of holes, I cannot hold,  
I runne out ev'ry way, when tales are told.

It hath often befallen me, to forget the word, which but three houres before I had either given or received of another, and to forget where I had laid my purse; let *Cicero* say what he list. I helpe my selfe to loose, what I particularly locke up. *Memoria certe non modo Philosophiam, sed omnis vitæ usum, omnesque artes una maxime continet. Assuredly memorie alone, of all other things, compriseth not onely Philosophy, but the use of our whole life, and all the sciences.* Memorie is the receptacle and case of knowledge. Mine being so weake, I have no great cause to complaine if I know but little. I know the names of Arts in Generall, and what they treat of, but nothing further. I turne and tosse over bookes, but do not studie them; what of them remaines in me, is a thing which I no longer acknowledge to be any bodies else. Onely by that hath my judgement profited; and the discourses and imaginations, wherewith it is instructed and trained up. The authours, the place, the words, and other circumstances, I sodainly forget; and am so excellent in forgetting, that as much as any thing else I forget mine owne writings and compositions. Yea, mine owne sayings are every hand-while alleadged against my selfe, when God wot I perceive it not. He that would know of me, whence or from whom the verses or examples, which here I have hudled up are taken, should greatly put me to my shifts, and I could hardly tell it him. Yet have I not begged them, but at famous and very wel known gates, which though they were rich in themselves, did never please me, unlesse they also came from rich and

## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

honourable hands, and that authority concur with reason. It is no great marvell, if my booke follow the fortune of other bookes; and my memory forgo or forget as wel what I write, as what I reade: and what I give, as well as what I receive. Besides the defect of memory, I have others, which much further my ignorance. My wit is dull and slow, the least cloud dimmeth it, so that (for example sake) I never proposed riddle unto it (were it never so easie) that it was able to expound. There is no subtiltie so vaine, but confounds me. In games, wherein wit may beare a part, as of chesse, of cards, of tables and others, I could never conceive but the common and plainest draughts. My apprehension is very sluggish and gloomy; but what it once holdeth, the same it keepeth fast: and for the time it keepes it, the same it embraceth generally, strictly and deeply. My sight is quicke, sound, perfect and farre-seeing, but easily wearied, if much charged or emploied. By which occasion I can have no great commerce with books but by others service which reade unto me. *Plinie* the yonger can instruct those that have tri'd it, how much this fore-slowing importeth those that give themselves to this occupation. There is no spirit so wretched or so brutish, wherein some particular facultie is not seene to shine; and none so low buried, but at one hole or other it will sally out sometimes. And how it commeth to passe, that a minde blinde and slumbering in all other things, is in some particlar effects, lively, cleare and excellent, a man must inquire of cunning masters. But those are the faire spirits, which are universall, open, and readie to all, if not instructed, at least to be instructed. Which I alleage to accuse mine: For, be it either through weakenesse, or retchlessnesse (and to be carelesse of that which lieth at our feet, which wee have in



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

our hands, which neerest concerneth the use of life, is a thing farre from my Dogma or Doctrine) there is none so simple or so ignorant as mine, in divers such common matters, and of which without imputation or shame a man should never be ignorant; whereof I must needs tell some examples. I was borne and brought up in the Countrie, and amidst husbandry: I have since my predecessours quit me the place and possession of the goods I enjoy, both businesse and husbandry in hand. I cannot yet cast account either with penne or Counters. There are divers of our French Coines, I know not: nor can I distinguish of one graine from another, be it in the field or in the barne, unlesse it be very apparant: nor do I scarcely know the difference betweene the Cabige or Lettice in my Garden. I understand not the names of the most usuall tooles about husbandrie, nor of the meanest principles of tillage, which most children know. I was never skilfull in Mechanicall arts, nor in Traffike or knowledge of Merchandize, nor in the diversitie and nature of fruits, wines, or cates, nor can I make a Hawke, physick a Horse, or teach a Dogge. And since I must make ful shew of my shame or ignorance, it is not yet a moneth since, that I was found to be ignorant, wherto Leven served to make bread withal: or what it was to cunne Wine. The *Athenians* were anciently wont to thinke him very apt for the Mathematickes, that could cunningly order or make up a faggot of brushe wood. Verily a man might draw a much contrarie conclusion from me: For let me have all that may belong to a Kitchin, yet shall I be ready to starve for hunger. By these partes of my confession, one may imagine divers others, to my cost and detriment. But howsoever I make my selfe knowne, alwaies provided it be as I am indeed, I have my purpose.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

And I excuse not my selfe, that I dare set downe  
in writing, so base and frivolous matters as these.  
The basenesse of the subject forceth me thereunto.  
Let who so list accuse my project. but not my pro-  
gresse. So it is that without being warned of others,  
I see very well how little this weigheth or is worth,  
and I perceive the fondnesse of my purpose. It is  
sufficient that my Judgement is not dismayed or  
distracted, wherof these be the *Essaies*.

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

*Nasutus sis usque luct, sis denique natus  
Quantum noluerit ferre rogatus Atlas :  
Et parvis ipsum tu deridere Latinum,  
Non potes, in nugis dicere plura meus,  
Ipse ego quim dixi : quid dentem dente juvabit  
Rodere ? carne opus est, si satur esse velis  
Ne perdas operam, qui se mirantur, in illos  
Virus habe, nos hæc norimus esse nihil.*

—MART. xiii. *Epig.* ii. 1.

Suppose you were long nos'd, suppose such nose you weare  
As *Atlas*, if you should intreat him, would not beare,  
That you in flouting old *Latinus* can be fine.  
Yet can you say no more against these toys of mine,  
Then I have said ; what boote, tooth with a tooth to what ?  
You must have fleshe, if you to glut your selfe be set.  
Loose not your paines ; 'gainst them who on themselves are  
doting  
Keepe you your sting : we know these things of ours are  
nothing.

I am not bound to utter no follies, so I be not  
deceived to know them : And wittingly to erre, is  
so ordinarie in me, that I erre not much otherwise ;  
and seldome erre casually. It is a small matter to  
yeeld the fond actions unto the rashnesse of my  
humors, since I cannot warrant my selfe ordinarily  
to yeeld them the vicious. Being at *Barleduc*, I  
saw, for the commendation of *Renate* the King of  
*Sicily* memory a picture which with his owne hands  
he had made of himselfe, presented unto our King  
*Francis* the second : why is it not as lawfull for

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

every man else to pourtray himself with his pen, as it was for him to doe it with a pensell? I will not then forget this blemish, unfit to be seene of all. That is irresolution: a most incommodious defect in the negotiation of worldly affaires: I cannot resolve in matters admitting doubtfulness:

*Ne sì, ne nò, nel cuor mi suona intiero.*

—PETR. *pa. i. son. cxxxviii. 8.*

Nor yea, nor nay, sounds clearely in my heart.

I can maintaine an opinion, but not make choise of it: For in humane things, what side soever a man leaneth on, many apparances present themselves unto us, which confirm us in them: and *Chrysippus* the Philosopher was wont to say; that he would learn nothing else of his maisters *Zeno* and *Cleanthes*, but their doctrines simply: For, proofes and reasons he would finde enough of himselfe. Let me turne to what side I will, I ever finde sufficient matter, and likly-hood to keepe my selfe unto it. Thus keepe I doubt and liberty to my selfe, to chuse, untill occasion urge me, and then (to confesse the truth) as the common saying is, I cast my feather to the wind, and yeeld to fortunes mercie. A verie light inclination, and a slender circumstance caries me away.

*Dum in dubio est animus paulo momento huc atque illuc impellitur.*

—TER. *And. act i. scen. 3.*

While mind is in suspence, with small a doe,  
T'is hither, thither, driven fro and to.

The uncertainty of my judgement, is in many occurrences so equally ballanced, as I would willingly compromise it to the deciding of chance and of the dice. And I note with great consideration of our humane imbecillitie, the examples, which the history of God it selfe hath left us of this use, to remit the determination of elections in doubtfull



## THE SECOND BOOKE

matters, unto fortune and hazard: *Sors cecidit super Matthiam* (Acts i. 26). *The lot fell upon Mathias.* *Humane reason is a two-edged dangerous sword;* Even in *Socrates* his hand, her most inward and familiar friend, marke what a many-ended staffe it is. So am I only fit to follow, and am easily caried away by the throng. I doe not greatly trust mine owne strength, to undertake to command, or to lead. I rejoyce to see my steps traced by others. If I must runne the hazard of an uncertaine choise, I would rather have it be under such a one, who is more assured of his opinions, and more wedded to them, than I am of mine; the foundation and platforme of which, I find to be very slippery; yet am I not very easie to change, forsomuch as I perceive a like weaknesse in contrary opinions. *Ipsa consuetudo assentiendi periculosa esse videtur, et lubrica* (Cic. Acad. Qu. iv.): *The very custome of assenting seemeth hazerdous and slippery:* Namely in politike affaires, wherein is a large field open to all motions, and to contestation.

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

*Iusta pari premitur veluti cum pondere libra,  
Prona nec hinc plus parte sedet, nec surgit ab illa.*  
—TIBULL. iv. hero. v. 41.

As when an even skale with equall weight is peized,  
Nor falles it downe this way, or is it that way raised.

As for example, *Machiavels* discourses, were very solid for the subject; yet hath it been very easie to impugne them, and those that have done, have left no lesse facilitie to impugne theirs. A man might ever find answeres enough to such an argument, both rejoynders, double, treble, quadruple, with this infinite contexture of debates, that our pettie-foggers have wrye-drawne, and wrested as much as ever they could in favour of their pleas and processes:

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XVII

### Of Pre- sumption

*Cardimur, et totidem plagis consumimus hostem.*

—HOR. ii. *Epist.* ii. 97.

Wee by our foes are beaten, if not slaine,  
Wee with as many strokes waste them againe.

Reasons having no other good ground then experience, and the diversity of humane events, presenting us with infinite examples for all manner of formes. A wise man of our times, saith, that where our Almanakes say warme, should a man say cold, and in lieu of drie, moyst; And ever set downe the contrarie of what they foretell; were he to lay a wager of one or others successe, he would not care what side he tooke, except in such things as admit no uncertaintie; as to promise extreame heat at Christmas, and exceeding cold at Midsomer. The like I thinke of these politike discourses. What part soever you are put unto, you have as good a game as your fellow: Provided you affront not the apparant and plaine principles. And therefore (according to my humor) in publike affaires, there is no course so bad (so age and constancie be joyned unto it) that is not better than change and alteration. *Our manners are exceedingly corrupted, and with a marveilous inclination bend toward worse and worse;* Of our lawes and customes many are barbarous, and divers monstrous; notwithstanding, by reason of the difficultie to reduce us to better estate, and of the danger of this subversion, if I could fixe a pegge into our wheele, and stay it where it now is, I would willingly doe it.

*—nunquam adeo fœdis adeoque pudendis  
Utimur exemplis, ut non pejora supersint.*

—JUVE. *Sat.* viii. 183.

Examples of so filthy shamefull kinde  
We never use, but worse remaines behind.

Instabilitie is the worst I find in our state, and that our lawes, no more than our garments, can take no



## THE SECOND BOOKE

settled forme. *It is an easie matter to accuse a state of imperfection, since all mortall things are full of it.* CHAPTER XVII

As easie is it to beget in a people a contempt of his ancient observances: No man ever undertooke it, but came to an end: But to establish a better state in place of that which is condemned and raced out, divers who have attempted it, have shronk under the burthen. Touching my conduct, my wisdom hath small share therein. I am very easily to be directed by the worlds publike order. Oh happy people, that doth what is commanded, better then they which command, without vexing themselves about causes; which suffer themselves gently to be rowled on, according to the heavens rowling. Obedience is never pure and quiet in him, who talketh, pleadeth and contendeth. In some, (to returne to my selfe) the only matter, for which I make some accompt of my selfe, is that, wherein never man did thinke himselfe defective. My commendation is vulgar, common and popular; For, who ever thought he wanted wit? It were a proposition, which in it selfe would imply contradiction. It is an infirmity, that is never where it is seene, it is very strong and fast-holding, but yet pierced and dissipated by the first beame of the patients sight, as doth the Sunnes raies scatter and disperce a gloomie mist. For a man to accuse himselfe, were to excuse himselfe of that subject; and to condemne himselfe, an absolving of himselfe. There was never so base a porter, nor so silly a woman, but thought he had sufficient wit for his provision. We easily know in others, the advantage of courage, of bodily strength, of experience, of disposition and of beautie, but we never yeeld the advantage of judgement to any body: And the reasons, which part from the simple naturall discourse in others, wee think, that had we but looked that way, wee had surely found them. The skill,

Of Pre-  
sumption



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

the knowledge, the stile and such like parts, which we see in strange workes, we easily perceive whether they exceede ours; but the meere productions of wit and understanding, every man deemeth it lyeth in him to meete with the very like, and doth hardly perceive the weight and difficultie of it, except (and that very scarcely) in an extreame and incomparable distance. And he that should clearely see the height of a strangers judgement, would come and bring his unto it. Thus, is it a kinde of exercising, whereof a man may hope but for meane commendation and small praise, and a manner of composition, of little or no [name] at all. And then, for whom do you write? The wiser sort, unto whom belongeth bookish jurisdiction, know no other prise but of doctrine, and avow no other proceeding in our wits, but that of erudition and art. If you have mistaken one *Scipio* for an other, what of any worth have you left to speake-of? He that is ignorant of *Aristotle* (according to them) he is therewithall ignorant of himselfe. Popular and shallow-headed mindes, cannot perceive the grace or comelinesse, nor judge of a smooth and quaint discourse. Now these two kindes possesse the world. The third, unto whose share you fall, of regular wits, and that are strong of themselves, is so rare, that justly it hath neither name or ranke amongst us; he loseth halfe his time, that doth aspire or endeavour to please it. It is commonly said, that the justest portion, nature hath given us of the graces, is that of sense and understanding: for there is no man, but is contented with the share she hath allotted him: Is it not reason? He who should see beyond that, should see further then his sight. I perswade my selfe to have good and sound opinions; but who is not so perswaded of his owne? One of the best trials I have of it, is the small esteeme I make of my selfe:

## THE SECOND BOOKE

for, had they not beene well assured, they would easily have suffered themselves to be deceived, by the affection I beare unto my selfe, singular, as he who brings it almost all unto my selfe, and that spill but a little besides. All that, which others distribute thereof unto an infinite number of friends and acquaintances, to their glorie and greatnesse, I referre to the repose of my spirit and to my selfe. What else-where escapes of it, is not properly by the appointment of my discourse:

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

—*mihi nempe valere et vivere doctus.*

Well learn'd in what concerneth me,  
To live, and how in health to be.

*As for my opinions, I finde them infinitely bold and constant to condemne mine insufficiencie. And to say truth, it is a subject, whereabout I exercise my judgement, as much as about any other. The world lookes ever for-right, I turne my sight inward, there I fix it, there I amuse it. Every man lookes before himselfe, I looke within my selfe: I have no busines but with my selfe. I uncessantly consider, controle and taste my selfe: other men goe ever else-where, if they thinke well on it: they go ever foreward,*

—*nemo in se tentat descendere.*—*PENS. Sat. iv. 23.*

No man attempteth this Essay,  
Into himselfe to finde the way.

as for me I roule me into my selfe. This capacitie of sifting out the truth, what, and howsoever it be in me, and this free humour I have, not very easily to subject my believe, I owe especially unto my selfe, for the most constant, and generall imaginations I have are those, which (as one would say) were borne with me: They are natural unto me, and wholly mine. I



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVII

#### Of Pre- sumption

produced them raw and simple, of a hardy and strong production, but somewhat troubled and unperfect: which I have since established and fortified by the authoritie of others, and by the sound examples of ancients, with whom I have found my selfe conformable in judgment: Those have assured me of my hold-fast of them, and have given me both the enjoying and possession thereof more absolute and more cleare. The commendation which every man seekes after, for a vivacitie and promptitude of wit, I chalenge the same by the order of a notable and farre-sounding action, or of some particular sufficiency; I pretend it by the order, correspondencie, and tranquillitie of opinions and customes. *Omnino si quidquam est decorum, nihil est profecto magis quam æquabilitas universæ vitæ, tum singularum actionum: quam conservare non possis, si aliorum naturam imitans omittas tuam* (Cic. Off. i.) Clearly if any thing bee decent for a man, nothing is more than an even carriage and equability of his whole life, and every action therein: which you cannot uphold, if following the nature of others, you let passe your owne. Behold here then how far forth I finde my selfe guilty of that first part, I said to be in the vice of presumption. Concerning the second, which consisteth in not esteeming sufficiently of others, I wot not whether I can so well excuse my selfe; for, whatsoever it cost mee, I intend to speake what is of it. It may be, the continuall commerce I have with ancient humours, and the Idea of those rich mindes of former ages doth bring me out of liking and distaste both of others and of my selfe, or that in truth we live in an age, which produceth things but meane and indifferent. So it is, that I know nothing worthy any great admiration. Also I know not many men so familiarly as I should, to be able to judge of them: and those with whom the quality of my condition



## THE SECOND BOOKE

doth ordinarily make me conversant, are for the most part, such as have little care for the manuring of the soule, and to whom nothing is proposed for chiefe felicitie, but honour; and for absolute perfection, but valour. Whatsoever I see or beauteous or worthy in any other man, I willingly commend and regard; yea and I often endeare my selfe with what I thinke of it, and allow my selfe to lie so farre forth: For, I cannot invent a false subject. I willingly witnesse with my friends what I finde praise-worthy in them. And of an inch of valour, I willingly make an inch and a halfe; but to lend them qualities they have not, I cannot; and openly to defend their imperfections, I may not: yea, bee they mine enemies, I shall sincerely give them their due, in witnessing their worth or honour. My affection may change; my judgement never. And I confound not my quarell with other circumstances, that are impertinent and belong not unto it. And I am so jealous of the liberty of my judgement, that for what passion soever, I can hardly quit it. I wrong my selfe more in lying, than him of whom I lie. This commendable and generous custome of the Persian nation, is much noted; *They speake very honourably and justly of their mortall enemies, and with those with whom they were at deadly fude and warre, so farre forth as the merit of their vertue deserved.* I know divers men who have sundry noble and worthy parts; some wit, some courage, some dexteritie, some conscience, some a readinesse in speech, some one Science, and some another; but of a great man in generall, and that hath so many excellent parts together, or but one, in such a degree of excellencie, as hee may thereby be admired, or but compared to those of former ages whom we honour, my fortune hath not permitted me to see one. And the greatest I ever knew living (I meane of naturall parts of the minde, and the best

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

borne) was *Stephanus de la boitie*: Verily it was a compleat minde, and who set a good face, and shewed a faire countenance upon all matters: A minde after the old stampe, and which, had fortune therewith beene pleased, would no doubt have brought forth wondrous effects; having by skil and study added very much to his rich naturall gifts. But I know not how it comes to passe, and surely it doth so, there is as much vanitie and weakenesse of understanding found in those, that professe to have most sufficiencie, that will entermeddle with learned vacations, and with the charges that depend of books, than in any sort of people; whether it be because there is more required, and expected at their hands, and common faults cannot be excused in them, or that the selfe-opinion of knowledge emboldeneth them the more to produce and discover themselves over-forward, whereby they loose and betray themselves. As an Artificer doeth more manifest his sottishnesse in a rich piece of worke, which he hath in hand, if foolishly and against the rules of his trade he seeke to apply it and entermeddle, than in a vile and base one; and men are more offended at a fault or oversight in a statue of gold, than in one of clay. These doe as much, when they set foorth things, which in themselves and in their place, would be good; for, they employ them without discretion, honouring their memory at the cost and charge of their understanding: and doing honour to *Cicero*, to *Galen*, to *Ulpian*, and to Saint *Jerome*, to make themselves ridiculous. I willingly returne to this discourse of the fondnesse of our institution: whose aime hath beene to make us not good and wittie, but wise and learned; She hath attained her propose. It hath not taught us to follow vertue and embrace wisdom; but made an impression in us of its Etymologie and derivation.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*We can decline vertue, yet can we not love it.* If wee know not what wisdom is by effect and experience, wee know it by prattling and by rote. We are not satisfied to know the race, the alliances, and the pedegrees of our neighbours, but we wil have them to be our friends, and contract both conversation and intelligence with them: It hath taught us the definitions, the divisions, and distinctions of vertue, as of the surnames and branches of a genealogie, without having other care to contract practise of familiaritie or private acquaintance betweene us and it. She hath appointed us for our learning, not bookes that have sounder and truer opinions, but volumes that speake the best Greeke or latine: and amongst her choise words, hath made the vainest humours of antiquitie to glide into our conceits. *A good institution changeth judgement and manners,* as it hapned to *Polemon*. This dissolute yong Græcian, going on day by chance to heare a Lecture of *Xenocrates*, where he not onely marked the eloquence and sufficiencie of the Reader, and brought not home the knowledge of some notable thing, but a more apparant and solide fruit, which was the sodaine change and amendment of his former life. Who ever heard such an effect of our discipline?

CHAPTER  
XVII  
Of Pre-  
sumption

—*faciasne quod olim*

*Mutatus Polemon, ponas insignia morbi,  
Fasciatus, cubital, focalis, potus ut ille  
Dicitur ex collo furtim carpuisse coronas,  
Postquam est imprans correptus voce magistri?*

—*Hon. Ser. li. Sat. lii. 253.*

Can you doe as did *Polemon* reformed,  
Cast-off your sicknes signes, which you deformed,  
Your bolsters, mufflers, swathes? As he drinkin'de,  
His drunken garland covertly decline,  
By speech of fasting reader discipline?

The least disdainfull condition of men, me thinks, is that, which through simplicitie holds the



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVII

Of Pre-  
sumption

last ranke, and offereth us more regular commerce. The customes and discourses of Countrie-clownish-men, I finde them commonly to be more conformable and better disposed, according to the true prescription of Philosophie, then are those of our Philosophers. *Plus sçait vulgus, quia tantum, quantum opus est, sçait.* The vulgar is the wiser, because it is but as wise as it must needes. The worthiest men, I have judged by externall apparances (for, to judge them after my fashion, they should be sifted nearer) concerning war, and military sufficiencie, have been, the Duke of *Guise*, that died before *Orleans*, and the whilom Marshal *Strozzi*: For men extraordinarily sufficient, and endowed with no vulgar vertue, *Oliver*, and *l'Hospitall*, both great Chancelors of *France*. Poesie hath likewise in mine opinion, had hir vogue and credit in our age. We have store of cunning and able men in that profession, *Aurate*, *Beza*, *Buchanan*, *L'Hospitall*, *Montdore*, and *Turnebus*. As for French-men, I thinke they have attained the highest degree of perfection that can or ever shall be, and in those parts wherein *Ronsart*, and excellent *Bellay* have written, I thinke they are not farre short of the ancient perfection. *Adrianus Turnebus* knew more and better, what he knew, then any man in his age or of many ages past. The lives of the late Duke of *Alva*, and of our Constable *Mommorancie* have beene very noble, and have had sundrie rare resemblances of fortune. But the worthily-faire and glorious death of the last, in the full sight of *Paris*, and of his King, for their service, against his nearest friends and alliance, in the front of an armie, victorious through his conduct of it, and with an hand-stroke, in that old age of his, deserveth in mine opinion, to be placed and registred amongst the most renoumed and famous accidents of my times. As also the constant goodnes, the mildnes in behaviour, and

## THE SECOND BOOKE

conscionable facility of *Monsieur la Nolle*, in such an injustice of armed factions (a very schoole of treason, of inhumanitie and brigandage) wherein he was ever brought up, a worthie and famous man of warre, and most experienced in his profession. I have greatly pleased my selfe in publishing in sundrie places, the good hope I have of *Marie Gournay le Jars* my daughter in alliance, and truely of me beloved with more then a fatherly love, and as one of the best parts of my being, enfeofed in my home and solitarines. There is nothing in the world I esteeme more then hir. If childe-hoode may presage any future successe, hir minde shall one day be capable of many notable things, and amongst other of the perfection of this thrice-sacred amitie, whereunto we read not, hir sexe could yet attaine; the sinceritie and soliditie of her demeanors are therein already sufficient; hir kinde affection towards me is more then superabounding and such in deede as nothing more can be wished unto it, so that the apprehension, which she hath of my aproching end, by reason of the fifty five yeares, wherein her hap hath beene to know me, would somewhat lesse cruelly trouble hir. The judgement she made of my first Essayes, being a woman, of this age, so yong, alone where shee dwelleth, and the exceeding vehemencie wherewith she loved me, and long time, by the onely esteeme, which before ever she saw me, she had by them conceived of me, she desired me; is an accident most worthy consideration. Other vertues have had little or no currantnesse at all in this age: But valour is become popular by reason of our civill warres, and in this part, there are minds found amongst us very constant, even to perfection, and in great number, so that the choise is impossible to be made. Loe heere what hitherto I have knowen of any extraordinary, and not common greatnesse.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

*Of giving the lie*

### CHAPTER XVIII

*Of giving  
the lie*



YEA but, will some tell me, this des-  
seigne in a man to make himselfe a  
subject to write of, might be excused  
in rare and famous men, and who by  
their reputation, had bred some desire  
in others of their acquaintance. It  
is true, I confesse it, and I know, that a handicrafts-  
man will scarcely looke off his worke, to gaze upon  
an ordinary man: Whereas to se a notable great  
person come into a towne, he will leave both worke  
and shop. It ill beseemeth any man to make him-  
selfe knowen, onely he excepted, that hath somewhat  
in him worthy imitation, and whose life and opinions  
may stand as a patterne to all. *Cæsar* and *Xenophon*  
have had wherewithall to ground and establish their  
narration in the greatnesse of their deedes, as on a  
just and solid ground-worke. So are the Journall  
bookes of *Alexander* the great, the Commentaries  
which *Augustus*, *Cato*, *Brutus*, *Sylla* and divers  
others had left of their gests, greatly to be desired.  
Such mens Images are both beloved and studied, be  
they either in Brasse or Stone. This admonition is  
most true, but it concerneth me very little.

*Non recito cuiquam : nisi amicis, idque rogatus.*

*Non ubiuis, coramve quibuslibet. In medio qui*

*Scripta foro recitant sunt multi, quique lavantes.*

—HOR. Ser. i. Sat. iv. 73.

My writings I reade not, but to my friends, to any,  
Nor each-where, nor to all, nor but desir'd: yet many  
In Market-place read theirs,  
In Bathes, in Barbers-chaires.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

I erect not here a statue to be set up in the  
Market-place of a towne, or in a Church, or in any  
other publike place :

CHAPTER  
XVIII

Of giving  
the lie

*Nam equidem hoc studeo bullatis ut mihi rugis  
Pagina turgescat.*—Puns. Sat. v. 19.

I studie not, my written leaves should grow  
Big-swolne with bubbled toyes, which vaine breath's blow.

*Secreti loquimur.*—21.

We speake alone,  
Or one to one.

It is for the corner of a Library, or to amuse a  
neighbour, a kinsman, or a friend of mine withall,  
who by this image may happily take pleasure to  
renew acquaintance, and to reconverse with me.  
Others have beene emboldned to speake of them-  
selves, because they have found worthy and rich  
subject in themselves. I, contrariwise, because I  
have found mine so barren, and so shallow, that it  
cannot admit suspicion of ostentation. I willingly  
judge of other mens actions; of mine by reason of  
their nullity, I give small cause to judge. I finde  
not so much good in my selfe, but I may speake of  
it without blushing. Oh what contentment were it  
unto me, to heare some body that would relate the  
custome, the visage, the countenance, the most usuall  
words, and the fortunes of my ancestors. Oh how  
attentively would I listen unto it. Verily it were an  
argument of a bad nature, to seeme to despise the  
very pictures of our friends and predecessors, the  
fashion of their garments and armes. I keepe the  
writing, the manuall seale, and a peculiar sword:  
And I reserve still in my cabinet certaine long  
switches or wands, which my father was wont to  
carry in his hand. *Paterna vestis et annulus, tanto  
charior est posteris, quanto erga parentes major*

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XVIII

Of giving  
the lie

*affectus: The fathers garment and his ring is so much more esteemed of his successors, as their affection is greater towards their progenitors.* Notwithstanding if my posteritie be of another minde, I shall have wherewith to be avenged; for they cannot make so little accompt of me, as then I shal doe of them. All the commerce I have in this with the world, is, that I borrow the instruments of their writing, as more speedy, and more easie: in requitall whereof I may peradventure hinder the melting of some piece of butter in the market, or a Grocer from selling an ounce of pepper.

*Ne toga cordyllis, ne penula desit olivis.*

—MART. xiii. *Epig.* i. 1.

Lest Fish-fry should a fit gowne want,  
Lest cloakes should be for Olives scant.

*Et laxas scombris sæpe dabo tunicas.*

—CATUL. *Epig. Eleg.* xxvii. 8.

To long-tail'd Mackrels often I,  
Will side-wide (paper) cotes apply.

And if it happen no man read me, have I lost my time, to have entertained my selfe so many idle houres, about so pleasing and profitable thoughts? In framing this pourtraite by my selfe, I have so often beene faine to frizle and trimme me, that so I might the better extract my selfe, that the patterne is thereby confirmed, and in some sort formed. Drawing my selfe for others, I have drawne my selfe with purer and better colours, then were my first. I have no more made my booke, then my booke hath made me. A booke consubstantiall to his Author: Of a peculiar and fit occupation. A member of my life. Not of an occupation and end, strange and forraine, as all other bookes. Have I mis-spent my time, to have taken an account of my selfe so continually and so curiously? For those who onely run



## THE SECOND BOOKE

themselves over by fantasie, and by speech for some  
houres, examine not themselves so primely and  
exactly, nor enter they into themselves, as he doth,  
who makes his study his worke, and occupation of  
it: Who with all his might, and with all his credit  
engageth himselfe to a register of continuance. The  
most delicious pleasures, though inwardly digested,  
shun to leave any trace of themselves; and avoide  
the sight, not onely of the people, but of any other.  
How often hath this busines [diverted] me from  
tedious and yrksome cogitations? (And al frivolous  
ones must be deemed tedious and yrksome.) Nature  
hath endowed us with a large faculty to entertaine  
our selves apart, and often calleth us unto it: To  
teach us, that *partly wee owe our selves unto society,*  
*but in the better part unto our selves.* To the end I  
may in some order and project marshall my fantasie,  
even to dote, and keepe it from loosing, and strag-  
gling in the aire, there is nothing so good, as to give  
it a body, and register so many idle imaginations as  
present themselves unto it. I listen to my humors,  
and harken to my conceits, because I must enroule  
them. How often, being grieved at some action,  
which civility and reason forbad me to withstand  
openly, have I disgorged my selfe upon them here,  
not without an intent of publike instruction? And  
yet these Poeticall rods,

*Zon dessus l'œil, zon sur le groin,  
Zon sur le dos du Sagoin,*

are also better imprinted upon paper, than upon the  
quicke flesh; What if I lend mine ears, somewhat  
more attentively unto bookes, sith I but watch if I  
can filch something from them, wherewith to enam-  
mell and uphold mine? I never studie to make  
a booke; Yet have I somewhat studied, because I  
had already made it (if to nibble or pinch, by the

CHAPTER  
XVIII

Of giving  
the lie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVIII

Of giving  
the lie

head or feet, now one Authour, and then another be in any sort to study) but nothing at all to forme my opinions: Yea being long since formed, to assist, to second and to serve them. *But whom shall we believe speaking of himselfe, in this corrupted age?* since there are few or none, whom we may beleieve speaking of others, where there is lesse interest to lie. The first part of customes corruption, is, the banishment of truth: For as *Pindarus* said, *to be sincerely true, is the beginning of a great vertue*; and the first article *Plato* requireth in the Governor of his Common-wealth. Nowadaies, that is not the truth which is true, but that which is perswaded to others. As we cal money not onely that which is true and good, but also the false; so it be currant. Our Nation is long since taxed with this vice. For *Salvianus Massiliensis* who lived in the time of *Valentinian* the Emperour, saith, that amongst French-men, to lie and forswear is no vice but a manner of speach. He that would endear this Testimonie, might say, it is now rather deemed a vertue among them. Men frame and fashion themselves unto it, as to an exercise of honour; for, *disimulation is one of the notablest qualities of this age*. Thus have I often considred, whence this custome might arise, which we observe so religiously, that we are more sharply offended with the reproach of this vice, so ordinary in us, than with any other; and that it is the extremest injury, may be done us in words, to upbraid and reproch us with a lie. Therein I find, that it is naturall, for a man to defend himselfe most from such defects as we are most tainted with. It seemeth that if we but shew a motion of revenge, or are but moved at the accusation, we in some sort discharge our selves of the blame or imputation; if we have it in effect, at least we condemne it in apparance. May it not also be, that this reproch seemes to enfold cowardise and faintnesse of hart? Is

## THE SECOND BOOKE

there any more manifest, than for a man to eate and deny his owne Word? What? To deny his Word wittingly? To lie is a horrible-filthy vice; and which an ancient writer setteth forth very shamefully, when he saith, that *whosoever lieth, witnesseth that he contemneth God and therewithall feareth men.* It is impossible more richly to represent the horreur, the vilenesse and the disorder of it: For, *what can be imagined so vile, and base, as to be a coward towards men, and a boaster towards God?* Our intelligence being onely conducted by the way of the Word: Who so falsifieth the same, betraieith publik society. It is the onely instrument, by meanes wherof our wils and thoughts are communicated: it is the interpretour of our soules: If that faile us we hold our selves no more, we enter-know one another no longer. If it deceive us, it breaketh al our commerce, and dissolveth al bonds of our policie. Certaine Nations of the new *Indiæ* (whose names we need not declare, because they are no more; for the desolation of this conquest hath extended it selfe to the absolute abolishing of names and ancient knowledge of Places, with a marvellous and never the like heard example) offered humane blood unto their Gods, but no other than that which was drawne from their tongues and eares, for an expiation of the sinne of lying as well heard as pronounced. That good-fellow-Grecian said, children were dandled with toies, but men with words. Concerning the sundry fashions of our giving the lie, and the lawes of our honour in that and the changes they have received, I will refer to another time to speake what I thinke and know of it, and if I can, I will in the meane time learne, at what time this custome tooke his beginning, so exactly to weigh and precizely to measure words, and tie our honour to them: for it is easie to judge, that it was not anciently amongst the

CHAPTER  
XVIII

Of giving  
the lie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XVIII

Of giving  
the lie

Romans and Græcians. And I have often thought it strange, to see them wrong and give one another the lie, and yet never enter into quarrell. The lawes of their duty, tooke some other course than ours. *Cæsar* is often called a thiefe, and sometimes a drunkard to his face. We see the liberty of their invectives, which they write one against another: I meane the greatest Chieftaines and Generals in war, of one and other Nation, where words are onely retorted and revenged with words and never wrested to further consequence.

### THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

*Of the liberty of Conscience*



It is ordinarily seene, how good intentions being managed without moderation, thrust men into most vicious effects. In this controversie, by which France is at this instant molested with civill warres, the best and safest side, is no doubt, that which maintaineth both the ancient religion and policy of the Country. Neverthelesse amongst the honest men that follow it (for my meaning is not to speake of those, who use them as a colour, either to exercise their particular revenges, or to supply their greedy avarice, or to follow the favour of Princes: But of such as do it with a true zeale toward their religion, and an unfained holy affection, to maintaine the peace and uphold the state of their country) of those I say, divers are seene, whome passion thrusts out of the bounds of reason, and often forceth them to take and follow unjust, violent and rash counsels. Certaine it is, that when first our religion beganne to



## THE SECOND BOOKE

gaine authoritie with the Lawes, it's zeale armed many against all sorts of Pagane bookes, whereof the learned sort have a great losse. My opinion is, that this disorder hath done more hurt to learning, than all the Barbarian flames. *Cornelius Tacitus* is a sufficient testimonie of it: for, howbeit the Emperor *Tacitus* his kinsman had by expresse appointment stored all the libraries in the World with it, notwithstanding one onely entire copy could not escape the curious search of those, who sought to abolish it, by reason of five or sixe vaine clauses, contrary to our beleefe. They have also had this easily to affoord false commendations to all the Emperours, that made for us, and universally to condemne al the actions of those, which were our adversaries, as may plainly be seene in *Julian* the Emperor, surnamed the Apostata; who in truth was a notable-rare-man, as he whose mind was lively endowed with the discourses of Philosophy, unto which he professed to conforme all his actions; and truly there is no kind of vertue, whereof he hath not left most notable examples. In chastity (whereof the whole course of his life giveth apparant testimony) a like example, unto that of *Alexander* and *Scipio* is read of him, which is, that of many wonderfull faire captive Ladies, brought before him, being even in the very prime of his age (for he was slain by the Parthians about the age of one and thirty yeares) he would not see one of them. Touching justice, himselfe would take the paines to heare al parties: And although for curiosity sake, he would enquire of such as came before him, what religion they were of, nevertheles the enmitie he bare to ours, did no whit weigh downe the ballance. Himselfe made sundrie good Lawes, and revoked diverse subsidies and impositions, his predecessours before him had received. We have two good Historians, as eye-witnesses of his actions. One of which (who is

CHAPTER  
XIX

Of the  
liberty of  
Conscience

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XIX

Of the  
liberty of  
Conscience

*Marcellinus*) in sundry places of his Historie bitterly reproveth this ordinance of his, by which he forbade schooles, and interdicted al Christian Rhethoricians, and Grammarians to teach: Saying, he wished this his action might be buried under silence. It is very likely, if he had done any thing else more sharpe or severe against us, he would not have forgot it, as he that was well affected to our side. Hee was indeede very severe against us, yet not a cruell enemy. For, our people themselves report this Historie of him, that walking one day about the City of *Calcedon*, *Maris* Bishop thereof, durst call him wicked and traitor to Christ, to whom he did no other thing, but answered thus: Goe wretched man, weepe and deplore the losse of thine eyes; to whom the Bishop replied, I thank Jesus Christ, that he hath deprived me of my sight, that so I might not view thy impudent face, affecting therby (as they say) a kind of Philosophicall patience. So it is, this part cannot be referred to the cruelties, which he is said to have exercised against us. He was (saith *Eutropius* my other testimony) an enemy unto Christianity, but without shedding of blood. But to returne to his justice, he can be accused of nothing but of the rigors he used in the beginning of his Empire, against such as had followed the faction of *Constantius* his Predecessour. Concerning sobriety, he [ever] lived a Souldiers kinde of life, and in time of peace, would feed no otherwise, than one who prepared and enured himselfe to the austeritie of war. Such was his vigilancie, that he divided the night into three or foure parts, the least of which he allotted unto sleepe; the rest he employed in visiting the state of his army, and his guardes, or in study; for, amongst other his rare qualities, he was most excellent in al sorts of learning. It is reported of *Alexander* the Great, that being laid downe to rest, fearing lest sleep



## THE SECOND BOOKE

should divert him from his thoughts and studies, he caused a bason to be set neere his bed side, and holding one of his hands out, with a brazen ball in it, that if sleepe should surprize him, loosing his fingers ends, the ball falling into the bason, might with the noyse rouze him from out his sleep. This man had a mind so bent to what he undertook, and by reason of his singular abstinence so little troubled with vapours, that he might well have past this devise. Touching military sufficiencie, he was admirable in all parts belonging to a great Captaine. So was he almost al his life time in continual exercise of war, and the greater part with us in *France* against the *Alemans* and *French*. Wee have no great memory of any man, that either hath seene more dangers, nor that more often hath made triall of his person. His death hath some affinitie with that of *Epaminondas*, for being stricken with an arrow, and attempting to pull it out, he had surely done it, but that being sharpe-cutting, it hurt and weakened his hand. In that plight he earnestly requested to be carryed forth in the midst of his army, that so he might encourage his souldiers, who without him couragiously maintained the battel, until such time as darke night severed the Armies. He was beholding to Philosophie for a singular contempt, both of himselfe and of all humane things. He assuredly believed the eternitie of soules. In matters of religion, he was vicious every-where. He was surnamed *Apostata*, because he had forsaken ours; notwithstanding this opinion seemes to mee more likely, that he never took it to heart, but that for the obedience which he bare to the law, he dissembled til he had gotten the Empire into his hands. He was so superstitious in his, that even such as lived in his time, and were of his owne religion, mocked him for it; and it was said, that if he had

CHAPTER  
XIX

Of the  
liberty of  
Conscience



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XIX

Of the  
liberty of  
Conscience

gained the Victory of the Parthians, he would have consumed the race or breede of Oxen, to satisfie his sacrifices. He was also besotted with the Art of sooth-saying, and gave authoritie to all manner of prognostikes. Amongst other things hee spake at his death, he said, he was much beholding to the Gods, and greatly thanked them, that they had not suffered him to be slain sodainly or by surprize, as having long before warned him both of the place and houre of his end; nor to die of a base and easie death, more beseeming idle and effeminate Persons, nor of a lingring, languishing, and dolorous death; and that they had deemed him worthy to end his life so nobly in the cours of his victories and in the flower of his glory. There had before appeared a vision unto him, like unto that of *Marcus Brutus*, which first threatned him in *Gaul*, and afterward even at the point of his death, presented it selfe to him in *Persia*. The speach he is made to speak when he felt himselfe hurt, *Thou hast vanquished oh Nazaræan*; or as some wil have it, *Content thy selfe oh Nazaræan*, would scarce have beene forgotten, had it beene believed of my testimonies, who being present in the army, have noted even the least motions, and words at his death, no more than certaine other wonders, which they annex unto it. But to return to my theame, he had long before (as saith *Marcellinus*) hatched Paganisme in his hart, but forsomuch as he saw al those of his armie to be Christians, he durst not discover himselfe. In the end, when he found himselfe to be sufficiently strong, and durst publish his minde, he caused the Temples of his Gods to be opened, and by all meanes endeavoured to advance idolatrie. And to attaine his purpose, having found in *Constantinople* the people very loose, and at ods with the Prelates of the christian Church, and caused

## THE SECOND BOOKE

them to appeare before him in his pallace, he instantly admonished them to appease all their civill dissensions, and every one without hinderance or feare apply themselves to follow and serve religion. Which he very carefully solicited, hoping this licence might increase the factions, and controversies of the division, and hinder the people, from growing to any unity, and by consequence from fortifying themselves against him, by reason of their concord and in one mind-agreeing intelligence: having by the cruelty of some Christians found, that *There is no beast in the world so much of man to be feared, as man*, Loe here his very words, or very neare: Wherein this is worthy consideration, that the Emperor *Julian*, useth the same receipt of libertie of conscience, to enkindle the trouble of civill dissension, which our Kings employ to extinguish. It may be said on one side, that, *To give faction the bridle to entertaine their opinion, is to scatter contention and sow division*, and as it were to lend it a hand to augment and encrease the same: There beeing no Barre or Obstacle of Lawes to bridle or hinder his course. But on the other side, it might also be urged, that to give factions the bridle to uphold their opinion, is by that facilitie and ease, the readie way to mollifie and release them; and to blunt the edge, which is sharpened by rarenesse, noveltie, and difficultie. And if for the honour of our Kings devotion, I believe better; it is, that since they could not doe as they would, they have fained to will what they could not.

### CHAPTER XIX

Of the  
liberty of  
Conscience



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

*We taste nothing purely*

### CHAPTER XX

*We taste  
nothing  
purely*



THE weaknes of our condition, causeth, that things in their naturall simplicitie and puritie cannot fall into our use. The elements we enjoy are altered: Metals likewise, yea golde must be empaired with some other stuffe to make it fit for our service. Nor vertue so simple, which *Ariston*, *Pirrho*, and the *Stoikes*, made the end of their life, hath beene able to doe no good without composition: Nor the *Cirenaike* sensualitie or *Aristippian* voluptuousnes. *Of the pleasures and goods we have, there is none exempted from some mixture of evill, and incommoditie.*

—*medio de fonte leporum*

*Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.*

—*LUCR. iv. 1224.*

From middle spring of sweetes some bitter springs,  
Which in the very flower smartly stings.

Our exceeding voluptuousnesse hath some aire of groning and wailing: Would you not say, it dieth with anguish? Yea when we forge it's image in hir excellencie, we deck it with Epithets of sickish and dolorous qualities: languor, effeminacy, weaknesse, fainting and *Morbidezza*, a great testimony of their consanguinity and consubstantiality: Excessive joy hath more severity, then jolity: Extreame and full content, more settlednes then cheerefulnesse. *Ipsa felicitas, se nisi temperat, premit* (*Sest. quare, etc.*). *Felicitie it selfe, unlesse it temper it selfe, distempers us.* Ease consumeth us. It is that, which an old Greeke verse saith of such a sense. The



## THE SECOND BOOKE

Gods sell us all the goods they give us: that is to say, they give us not one pure and perfect, and which we buy not with the price of some evill. Travell and pleasure, most unlike in nature, are notwithstanding followed together by a kind of I wot not what natural conjunction; *Socrates* saith, that some God attempted to huddle up together, and confound sorrow and voluptuousnesse: but being unable to effect it, he bethought himselfe to couple them together, at least by the taile. *Metrodorus* said, that in sadnesse there is some aloy of pleasure. I know not whether he meant any thing else, but I imagine, that for one to enure himselfe to melancholy, there is some kind of purpose, of consent and mutuall delight: I meane besides ambition, which may also be joynd unto it. There is some shadow of delicacy, and quaintnesse, which smileth and fawneth upon us, even in the lap of melancholy. Are there not some complexions, that of it make their nourishment?

CHAPTER  
XX

We taste  
nothing  
purely

—*est quidam flere voluptas.*

—*Ovi. Trist. iv. El. iii. 37.*

It is some pleasure yet,  
With teares our cheekes to wet.

And one *Attalus* in *Seneca* saith, the remembrance of our last friends is as pleasing to us, as bitterness to wine that is over old;

*Minister veteris puer falerni  
Ingere mi calices amariorez:*

—*Cat. Lyr. Epi. xxiv. 1.*

Sir boy, my servitor of good old wine,  
Bring me my cup thereof bitter, but fine.

and as of sweetly-sower apples; Nature discovereth this confusion unto us: painters are of opinion, that the motions and wrinkles in the face, which serve to weepe, serve also to laugh. Verely, before one or

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER

XX

We taste  
nothing  
purely

other be determined to expresse which ; behold the pictures successe, you are in doubt toward which one enclineth. And the extreimity of laughing entermingles it selfe with teares. *Nullum sine auctoramento malum est* (SEN. *Epig.* lxi.). *There is no evill without some obligation.* When I imagine man fraught with all the commodities may be wished, let us suppose, al his severall members were for ever possessed with a pleasure like unto that of generation, even in the highest point that may be: I finde him to sincke under the burthen of his ease, and perceive him altogether unable to beare so pure, so constant, and so universall a sensuality. Truly he flies when he is even upon the nicke, and naturally hastneth to escape it, as from a step, whereon he cannot stay or containe himselfe, and feareth to sincke into it. When I religiously confesse my selfe unto my selfe, I finde the best good I have, hath some vicious taint. And I feare that *Plato* in his purest vertue (I that am as sincere and loyall an esteemer thereof, and of the vertues of such a stampe, as any other can possibly be) if he had neerely listened unto it (and sure he listened very neere) he would therein have heard some harsh tune, of humane mixture, but an obscure tune, and onely sensible unto himselfe. *Man all in all, is but a botching and party-coloured worke. The very Lawes of Justice, can not subsist without some commixture of Injustice: And Plato saith, They undertake to cut off Hidraes heades, that pretend to remoove all incommodities and inconveniences from the Lawes. Omne magnum exemplum habet aliquid ex iniquo, quod contra singulos utilitate publica reprehenditur* (TACITUS, *Ann.* xiv. Cassi.). *Every great example hath some touch of injustice, which is requited by the common good against particulars, saith Tacitus.* It is likewise true, that for the use of life and service of publike society, there may

## THE SECOND BOOKE

be excesse in the purity and perspicuity of our spirits. This piercing brightnes hath overmuch subtilty and curiositie. They should be made heavy and dull, to make them the more obedient to example and practise; and they must be thickned and obscured, to proportion them to this shady and terrestriall life. Therefore are vulgar and lesse-wire-drawne-wits found to be more fit and happy in the conduct of affaires. And the exquisite and high-raised opinions of Philosophy, unapt and unfit to exercise. This sharp vivacity of the spirit, and this supple and restlesse volubility, troubleth our negotiations. Humane enterprises should be managed more grosely and superficially, and have a good and great part of them left for the rights of fortune. Affaires neede not bee sifted so nicely and so profoundly. A man looseth himselfe about the considerations of so many contrary lusters and diverse formes. *Volutantibus res inter se pugnantes, obtorpuerant animi* (Liv. dec. iv. lib. 2). *Their mindes were astonished, while they revolved things so different.* It is that which our elders report of *Simonides*; because his imagination, concerning the question *Hieron* the King had made unto him (which the better to answer he had diverse dayes allowed him to think of it) presented sundry subtile and sharpe considerations unto him; doubting which might be the likeliest; he altogether dispaireth of the truth. Whosoever searcheth al the circumstances and embraceth all the consequences therof, hindereth his election. *A meane engine doth equally conduct, and sufficeth for the executions of great and little weights.* It is commonly seene, that the best husbands and the thriftiest, are these who cannot tell how they are so; and that those cunning Arithmeticians doe seldome thrive by it. I know a notable pratler, and an excellent blasoner of all sorts of husbandry and thrift, who hath most pitteously

CHAPTER  
XX

We taste  
nothing  
purely



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER XX  
We taste  
nothing  
purely

let ten thousand pound sterline a yeare passe from him. I know another, who saith, he consulteth better then any man of his counsell, and there cannot be a properer man to see unto or of more sufficiencie; notwithstanding when he commeth to any execution, his own servants finde he is far otherwise: This I say without mentioning or accounting his ill lucke.

### THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER

*Against idlenesse, or doing nothing*



HE Emperor *Vespasian*, lying sicke of the disease whereof he died, omitted not to endeavour to understand the state of the Empire; and lying in his bed, uncessantly dispatched many affaires of great consequence; and his Physitians chiding him, as of a thing hurtfull to his health, he answered, *That an Emperour should die standing upright.* Loe heere a notable saying, fitting my humour, and worthy a great Prince. *Adrian* the Emperour used the same afterward to like purpose. And Kings ought often to be put in minde of it, to make them feele, that this great charge, which is given them of the commandement over so many men, is no idle charge; and that there is nothing may so justly distaste a subject from putting himselfe in paine and danger for the service of his Prince, then therewithilst to see him given to lazinesse, to base and vaine occupations, and to have care of his conservation, seeing him so carelesse of ours. If any shall go about to maintaine, that it is better for a Prince to mannage his wars by others, then by himselfe; Fortune will store him with sufficient examples of those, whose Lieutenants have atchieved great enterprises; and

## THE SECOND BOOKE

also of some whose presence would have beene more hurtfull, then profitable. But no vertuous and coragious Prince will endure to be entertained with so shamefull instructions. Under colour of preserving his head (as the statue of a Saint) for the good fortune of his estate, they degrade him of his office, which is altogether in military actions, and declare him incapable of it. I know one, would rather chuse to be beaten, then sleep while others fight for him; and who without jealousie never saw his men performe any notable act in his absence. And *Selim* the 1. had reason to say, that *he thought victories gotten in the master's absence, not to be complete.* So much more willingly would he have said, that such a master ought to blush for shame, who onely by his name should pretend any share in it, having thereunto employed nothing but his thought and verbal direction: Nor that, since in such a busines, the advises and commandements, which bring honor, are only those given in the field and even in the action. No Pilot exerciseth his office standing still. The Princes of *Otomans* race (the chieftest race in the world in warlike fortune) have earnestly embraced this opinion. And *Bajazeth* the second with his sonne, who amusing themselves about sciences, and other private home-matters, neglected the same, gave diverse prejudiciall blowes unto their Empire. And *Amurath* the third of that name, who now raigneth, following their example, beginneth very wel to feele their fortunes. Was it not the King of *England*, *Edward* the third, who spake these words of our King *Charles* the fifth? *There was never King that lesse armed himselfe; and yet was never King, that gave me so much to doe, and put me to so many plunges.* He had reason to think it strange, as an effect of fortune, rather then of reason. And let such as will number

CHAPTER  
XXI

Against  
idlenesse, or  
doing  
nothing



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXI

Against  
idlenesse, or  
doing  
nothing

the Kings of *Castile* and *Portugall* amongst the warlike and magnanimous conquerors, seeke for some other adherent then my selfe; forsomuch as twelve hundred leagues from their idle residence they have made themselves masters of both *Indias*, onely by the conduct and direction of their factors; of whom it would be knowne, whether they durst but goe and enjoy them in person. The Emperor *Julian* said moreover, that a Philosopher and gallant minded man ought not so much as breathe; that is to say, not to give corporall necessities, but what may not be refused them; ever holding both minde and body busied about notable, great and vertuous matters. He was ashamed, any man should see him spitte or sweate before people (which is also said of the Lacedemonian youths, and *Xenophon* reporteth it of the Persian) forasmuch as he thought that continuall travel, exercise and sobriety shold have concocted and dried up all such superfluities. What *Seneca* saith shall not impertinently be alleadged here; That the ancient Romans kept their youth upright, and taught their children nothing, that was to be learned sitting. It is a generous desire, to endeavor to die both profitable and manlike: But the effect consisteth not so much in our good resolution, as in our good fortune. A thousand have resolved to vanquish or to die fighting, which have missed both the one and other: Hurts or emprisonment, crossing their desseigne and yeelding them a forced kinde of life. There are diseases which vanquish our desires and knowledge. Fortune should not have seconded the vanitie of the *Romane* Legions, who by oathe bound themselves, either to die or conquer. *Victor, Marce Fabi, revertar ex acie: Si fallo, Jovem patrem Gradivumque Martem aliosque iratos invoco Deos* (Liv. dec. i. lib. 2). *I will, O Marcus Fabius, returne conqueror from the*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

armie. *If in this I deceive you, I wish both great* CHAPTER  
*Jupiter and Mars, and the other Gods offended with* XXI  
*me.* The Portugalles report, that in certaine places Against  
of their Indian conquests, they found some Souldiers, idlenesse, or  
who with horrible execrations had damned them- doing  
selves, never to enter into any composition, but nothing  
either they would be killed or remaine victorious;  
and in signe of their vowe wore their heads and  
beards shaven. We may hazard and obstinate our  
selves long enough. It seemeth that blowes shunne  
them, who over-joyfully present themselves unto  
them; and unwillingly reach those that overwill-  
ingly goe to meeete them and corrupt their end.  
Some unable to lose his life by his adversaries force,  
having assaied all possible meanes, hath been en-  
forced to accomplish his resolution, either to beare  
away the honor; or not to carry away his life, and  
even in the fury of the fight to put himselfe to  
death. There are sundrie examples of it; but note  
this one. *Philistus*, chiefe Generall of yong *Diony-*  
*sius* his navie against the *Siracusans*, presented them  
the battle, which was very sharply withstood, their  
forces being alike; wherein, by reason of his prow-  
esse he had the better in the beginning. But the  
*Siracusans* flocking thicke and threefold about his  
gally to grapple and board him, having performed  
many worthy exployts with his owne person, to  
ridde himselfe from them, despairing of al escape,  
with his own hand deprived himselfe of that life,  
which so lavishly and in vaine he had abandoned  
to his enemies hands. *Moly Moluch*, King of *Fez*,  
who not long since obtained that famous victory  
against *Sebastian* King of *Portugall*; a notable  
victorie, by reason of the death of three Kings,  
and transmission of so great a Kingdome to the  
crownne of *Castile*; chanced to be grievously sicke,  
at what time the Portugales with armed hand entred

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### XXI

Against  
idlenesse, or  
doing  
nothing

his dominions, and afterward, though he foresaw it, approaching nearer unto death, empaired worse and worse. Never did man more stoutly, or more vigorously make use of an undanted courage, than he. He found himselfe very weake to endure the ceremonious pompe which the Kings of that Country, at their entrance into the Camp, are presented withall, which according to their fashion is ful of all magnificence and state, and charged with al maner of action; and therefore he resigned that honour to his brother, yet resigned he nothing but the office of the chiefe Captaine. Himselfe most gloriously executed, and most exactly perfourmed all other necessary duties and profitable Offices. Holding his body laid along his cowch, but his minde upright and courage constant, even to his last gaspe; and in some sort after. He might have undermined his enemies, who were fond-hardily advanced in his dominions: and was exceedingly grieved, that for want of a little longer life, and a substitute to manage the warre, and affaires of so troubled a state, he was enforced to seeke a bloody and hazardous battel, having another pure and undoubted victory in hand. He notwithstanding managed the continuance of his sicknes so miraculously, that he consumed his enemy, diverted him from his Sea-Fleete, and Maritime places, he held along the Coast of *Affricke*, even untill the last day of his life, which by designe he reserved and emploied for so great and renowned a fight.

He ranged his battell in a round, on ev'ry side besieging the Portugals army, which bending round, and comming to close, did not onely hinder them in the conflict (which through the valor of that yong-assailant King was very furious) since they were to turne their faces on all sides, but also hindred them from running away after the rowte.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

And finding all issues seized, and all passages closed, CHA  
they were constrained to turne upon themselves: X  
*coacervanturque non solum corde, sed etiam fuga;* Agai  
*They fall on heapes, not only by slaughter but by* idlen  
*flight.* And so pel-mell to heape one on anothers doing  
neck, preparing a most murtherous and compleat noth  
victory to the Conquerors. When he was even  
dying, he caused himselfe to be carryed and haled,  
where-ever neede called for him; and passing along  
the files, he exhorted the Captaines, and animated  
the Souldiers one after another. And seeing one  
wing of the fight to have the worst, and in some  
danger, no man could hold him, but he would needs  
with his naked-sword in hand get on hors-backe,  
striving by al possible meanes, to enter the throng,  
his men holding him, some by the bridle, some by  
the Gowne, and some by the Stirrops. This toyle  
and straining of himselfe, made an end of that little  
remainder of his life: Then was he laid on his bed:  
But comming to himselfe again, starting up, as out  
of a swown, each other faculty failing him he gave  
them warning to conceale his death (which was the  
necessariest commandement he could give his ser-  
vants, lest the souldiers hearing of his death, might  
fall into dispaire) and so yeelded the Ghost, holding  
his fore-fingers upon his mouth; an ordinary signall  
to impose silence. What man ever lived so long  
and so neere death; Who ever died so upright and  
undaunted? The extreamest degree, and most  
naturall, couragiously to manage death, is to see or  
front the same, not onely without amazement, but  
without care; the course of life continuing free, even  
in death. As Cato, who ammuzed himselfe to studie  
and sleepe, having a violent and bloody death, present  
in his heart, and as it were holding it in his hand.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

### *Of running Posts, or Curriers*

#### CHAPTER XXII

#### Of running Posts, or Curriers



HAVE been none of the weakest in this exercise, which is proper unto men of my stature, well-trust, short and tough, but now I have given it over: It toyles us over-much, to hold out long. I was even-now reading, how King *Cyrus*, that he might more speedily receive news from al parts of his Empire, (which was of exceeding great length) would needs have it tried, how far a horse could in a day goe outright, without baiting, at which distance he caused stations to be set up and men to have fresh horses ready, for al such as came to him. And some report, this swift kind of running, answereth the flight of Cranes. *Cæsar* saith, that *Lutius Vibulus Rufus*, making hast to bring *Pompey* an advertisement, rode day and night, and to make more speed shifted many horses. And himselfe (as *Suetonius* writeth) would upon an hyred coache runne a hundred miles a day. And sure he was a rancke-runner: for where any river hindred his way, he swam it over, and never went out of his way to seek for a bridg or foard. *Tiberius Nero* going to visite his brother *Drusus*, who lay sick in *Germanie*, having three Coaches in his company, ranne two hundred miles in foure and twenty houres. In the Romane warres against King *Antiochus*, *Titus Sempronius Gracchus* (saith *Titus Livius*) *per dispositos equos prope incredibili celeritate ab Amphisa tertio die Pellam pervenit: By horse laid poste, with incredible speede within three dayes he past from Amphisa to Pella.* And viewing the place, it seemeth, they were set Stations for Postes, and not newly appointed for

## THE SECOND BOOKE

that race. The invention of *Cecinna* in sending newes to those of his house had much more speede: he carried certaine swallowes with him, and having occasion to send newes home, he let them fly toward their nests, first marking them with some colour, proper to signifie what he meant, as before he had agreed upon with his friends. In the Theaters of *Rome*, the houshold Masters, carried Pigeons in their bosomes, under whose wings they fastened letters, when they would send any word home, which were also taught to bring back an answer. D. *Brutus*, used some being besieged in *Mutina*, and others elsewhere. In *Peru* they went poste upon mens backs, who tooke their Masters upon their shoulders, sitting upon certaine beares or chaires, with such agilitie, that in full running speede the first porters without any stay, cast their load upon other who upon the way waited for them, and so they to others. I understand that the Valachians, which are messengers unto the great Turk, use extreame diligence in their businesse, forasmuch as they have authoritie to dis-mount the first passengers they meet upon the high-way, and give him their tyred Horse. And because they shal not be weary, they are wont to swathe themselves hard about the bodie with a broad Swathe or Seare-cloath, as diverse others doe with us: I could never finde ease or good by it.

CHAPTER  
XXII

Of running  
Posts, or  
Curriers

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER

*Of bad meanes employed to a good end*

### CHAPTER XXIII

Of bad  
meanes em-  
ployed to a  
good end



HERE is a woonderfull relation and correspondencie found in this universall policie of Natures workes, which manifestly sheweth, it is neither casual, nor directed by diverse masters. The infirmities and conditions of our bodies, are likewise seene in states and governments: *Kingdomes and Commonwealths as well as we, are borne, flourish, and fade through age.* We are subject unto a repleatnesse of humours, hurtfull and unprofitable, yea be it of good humours (for even Physitians feare that, and because there is nothing constant in us; they say, that perfection of health over joyfull and strong, must by art be abated and diminished, lest our nature unable to settle it selfe in any certaine place, and for hir amendment to ascend higher, should over-violently recoil backe into disorder; and therefore they prescribe unto Wrestlers purging and phlebotomie, to subtract that superabundance of health from them) or of bad, which is the ordinary cause of sicknesse. Of such like repletion are States often seene to be sicke, and divers purgations are wont to be used to purge them. As wee have seene some to dismisse a great number of families (chiefly to disburthen the country) which elsewhere goe to seeke where they may at others charge seat themselves. In this sorte our ancient *French* leaving the high Countries of *Germanie*, came to possesse *Gaule*, whence they displaced the first Inhabitants. Thus grew that infinite confluence of people, which afterward under *Brennus* and others, over-ranne *Italie*. Thus the *Gothes* and *Vandalls*, as also the Nations



## THE SECOND BOOKE

which possesse *Greece*, left their naturall countries, to go where they might have more elbow-roume: And hardly shall we see two or three corners in the worlde, that have not felt the effect of such a remooving alteration. The Romanes, by such meanes, erected their Colonies; for perceiving their Citie to growe over-populous, they were wont to discharge it of unnecessarie people, which they sent to inhabite and manure the Countries they had subdued. They have also sometimes maintained warre with some of their enemies, not onely thereby to keepe their men in breath, lest Idlenesse the mother of Corruption, should cause them some worse inconvenience.

### CHAPTER XXIII

Of bad  
meanes em-  
ployed to a  
good end

*Et patimur longæ pacis mala, sævior armis  
Luxuria incumbit.*—JUVEN. Sat. vi. 192.

We suffer of long peace the soking harmes,  
On us lies luxury more fierce then armes.

But also to let the Common-wealth bloud, and somewhat to allay the over vehement heat of their youth, to lop the sprigs, and thin the branches of this over-spreading tree, too much abounding in ranknesse and gaillardise. To this purpose they maintained a good while war with the Carthaginians. In the treaty of *Bretigny*, *Edward* the 3. King of *England*, would by no meanes comprehend in that general peace the controversie of the Dutchie of *Britany* to the end he might have some way to disburthen himselfe of his men of war, and that the multitude of English-men, which he had employed about the warres of *France* should not returne into *England*. It was one of the reasons, induced *Philip* our King to consent, that his sonne *John* should be sent to warre beyond the seas, that so he might carry with him a great number of yong hot-blouds, which were amongst his trained military men. There are divers now adaies, which will speake thus, wishing

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXIII

Of bad  
meanes em-  
ploied to a  
good end

this violent and burning emotion we see and feele amongst us, might be derived to some neighbor war, fearing lest those offending humours, which at this instant are predominant in our bodie, if they be not diverted elsewhere, will still maintaine our fever in force, and in the end cause our utter destruction: And in truth *a forraine warre is nothing so dangerous a disease as a civill*: But I will not beleieve that God would favour so unjust an enterprise, to offend and quarrell with others for our commodity.

*Nil mihi tam valde placeat Rhannusia virgo,  
Quod temere invitis suscipiatur heris.*

—CAT. *Epig. Eleg. iv. 77.*

That fortune likes me not, which is constrained,  
By Lords unwilling rashly entertained.

Notwithstanding the weaknesse of our condition, doth often urge us to this necessity, to use bad meanes to a good end. *Lycurgus* the most virtuous and perfect Law-giver that ever was, devised this most unjust fashion, to instruct his people unto temprance, by force to make the Helotes, which were their servants, to be drunke, that seeing them so lost and buried in wine, the Spartanes might abhor the excesse of that vice. Those were also more to be blamed, who anciently allowed that criminall offenders, what death soever they were condemned unto, should by Physitians all alive be torne in pieces, that so they might naturally see our inward parts, and thereby establish a more assured certainty in their art: For if a man must needes erre or debauch himselfe, it is more excusable, if he doe it for his soules health, then for his bodie good. As the Romans trained up, and instructed their people to valour, and contempt of dangers and death, by the outrageous spectacles of Gladiators, and deadly fighting Fencers, who in presence of them all combated, mangled, sliced and killed one another;

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Quid vexari aliud tibi vult ars impia ludi,  
Quid mortes juvenum, quid sanguine pasta voluptas ?*

What else meanes that mad art of impious sence,  
Those yong-mens deaths, that bloud-fed pleasing sence ?

### CHAPTER XXIII

Of bad  
meanes em-  
ployed to a  
good end

which custome continued even untill the time of  
*Theodosius* the Emperour.

*Arripe delatam tua dux in tempora famam,  
Quodque patris superat successor laudis habeto :  
Nullus in urbe cadat, cujus sit parva voluptas,  
Jam solis contenta feris infamis arena,  
Nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis.*

—PRUD. *cont. Sym.* ii. f.

The fame defer'd to your times entertaine,  
Enherite praise which doth from Sire remaine,  
Let none die to give pleasure by his paine :  
Be shamefull Theaters with beasts content,  
Not in goar'd armes man-slaughter represent.

Surely it was a wonderfull example and of exceeding benefit for the peoples institution, to see dayly one or two hundred, yea sometimes a thousand brace of men armed one against another, in their presence to cut and hacke one another in pieces with so great constancy of courage, that they were never seene to utter one word of faintnes or commiseration, never to turne their backe, nor so much as to shew a motion of demissenesse. to avoide their adversaries blowes: but rather to extend their necks to their swords, and present themselves unto their strokes. It hath hapned to diverse of them, who through many hurts being wounded to death, have sent to aske the people, whether they were satisfied with their duty. before they would lie down in the place. They must, not only fight and die constantly, but jocondly : in such sort as they were cursed and bitterly scolded at. if in receiving their death they were any way scene to strive. yea [maidens] encited them to it.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XXIII

Of bad  
meanes em-  
ploied to a  
good end

—*consurgit ad ictus,  
Et quoties victor ferrum jugulo inserit, illa  
Delicias ait esse suas, pectusque jacentis  
Virgo modesta jubet converso pollice rumpi.*

—PRUD. cont. Sym. ii.

The modest Maide, when wounds are giv'n, upriseth;  
When victors sword the vanquisht throate surpriseth,  
She saith, it is hir sport, and doth command  
T' embroe the conquer'd breast, by signe of hand.

The first Romans disposed thus of their criminals:  
But afterward they did so with their innocent  
servants; yea of their free men, which were sold  
to that purpose: yea of Senators; and Roman  
Knights, and women also.

*Nunc caput in mortem vendunt, et funus arena,  
Atque hostem sibi quisque parat cum bella quiescunt.*

—MANIL. Astr. iv. 224.

They sell mens lives to death and stages sight,  
When wars do cease, they finde with whom to fight.

*Hos inter fremitus novosque lusus,  
Stat sexus rudis insciusque ferri,  
Et pugnas capit improbus viriles.*

Amidst these tumults, these strange sporting sights,  
That Sex doth sit, which knowes not how sword bites,  
And entertaines unmov'd, those manly fights.

Which I should deeme very strange and incredible;  
if we were not dayly accustomed to see in our wars  
many thousands of forraigne nations, for a very  
small some of mony to engage both their blood  
and life in quarrels wherein they are nothing in-  
teressed.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

### THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

*Of the Roman greatnesse*



WILL but speake a word of this infinite argument, and slightly glance at it, to shew the simplicitie of those, who compare the seely greatnesse of these times unto that: In the seaventh booke of *Ciceroes* familiar Epistles (and let Gramarians remove this title of Familiar, if they please, for, to say truth, it makes but little to the purpose: and they who in lieu of familiar, have placed *ad familiares*, may wrest some argument [for] themselves, from that which *Suetonius* saith in *Cæsars* life, that there was a volume of his Epistles *ad familiares*) there is one directed unto *Cæsar* then being in *Gaule*, in which *Cicero* repeats these very words, which were in the end of a former letter that *Cæsar* had written to him: *Touching Marcus Furius, whom thou hast commended unto me, I will make him King of Gaule, and if thou wilt have me preferre any other of thy friends, send them to me.* It was not new in a simple Roman Citizen (as *Cæsar* then was) to dispose of Kingdomes, for as well deprived he King *Déiotarus* of his, to give it to a Gentleman of the City of *Pergamo*, called *Mithridates*. And those who writ his life, mention many Kingdomes sold by him. And *Suetonius* reporteth, that he at one time wrested three millions and sixe hundred thousand crownes of gold from King *Ptolomæus*, which amounted very neere unto the price of his Kingdome.

*Tot Galatæ, tot Pontus eat, tot Lydia nummis:*

—CLAUD. in *Entrop.* i. 203.

*Forsomuch let Galatia go,  
Forsomuch Lidia, Pontus so.*

CHAPTER  
XXIV

Of the  
Roman  
greatnesse



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXIV

Of the  
Roman  
greatnesse

*Marcus Antonius* said, the greatnesse of the *Roman* people was not so much discerned by what it tooke, as by what it gave. Yet some ages before *Antonius*, was there one amongst others of so wonderfull authoritie, as through all his history I know no marke, carrieth the name of his credit higher. *Antiochus* possessed all *Aegypt*, and was very neere to conquer *Cipres*, and others depending of that Empire. Upon the progresse of his victories, *C. Popilius* came unto him in the behalfe of the Senate, and at first arrivall, refused to take him by the hand, before he had read the letters he brought him. The King having read them, said, he would deliberate of them. *Popilius* with a wand encircled the place about, where he stood, and thus bespake him; Give me an answer to carry backe to the Senate, before thou goest out of this circle. *Antiochus* amazed at the rudenesse of so urging a commandement, after he had pawsed a while, replied thus, I will doe what the Senate commandeth me. Then *Popilius* saluted him as a friend unto the *Roman* people. To have renounced so great a Monarchy, and forgon the course of so successefull prosperity, by the only impression of three written lines. He had good reason, as afterward he did, by his Ambassadors to send the Senate word, that he had received their ordinances with the same respect, as if they had come from the immortall Gods. All the Kingdomes *Augustus* subdued by right of war, he restored to those who had lost them, or presented strangers with them: And concerning this purpose, *Tacitus* speaking of *Cogidunus* King of England, by a wonderful tract makes us perceive this infinit greatnes and might. The *Romans* (saith he) were from all antiquity accustomed to leave those Kings whom they had vanquished, in the possession of their kingdomes, under their authority: *Ut haberent*



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*instrumenta servitutis et reges* (COR. TAC. *Vit. Jul. Agric.*). That they might have even Kings also for instruments of their bondage. It is very likely, that Soliman the great Turke, whom we have seene to use such a liberality, and give away the kingdome of Hungary, and other dominions, did more respect this consideration, then that he was wont to alleage; which is, that he was over wearied with the many Monarchies, and surcharged with the severall dominions, which either his owne or his ancestors vertue had gotten him.

CHAPTER  
XXIV

Of the  
Roman  
greatnesse

### THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

*How a man should not counterfeit to be sicke*



HERE is an epigram in Martiall, that may passe for a good one (for there are of all sortes in him) wherein he pleasantly relateth the storie of *Caelius*, who to avoide the courting of certaine great men in Rome, to give attendance at their rising, and to waite, assist and follow them, fained to be troubled with the goute; and to make his excuse more likely, he caused his legges to be ointed and swathed, and lively counterfeted the behaviour and countenance of a goutie man. In the end fortune did him the favour to make him goutie indeede.

*Tantum cura potest et ars doloris,  
Desiit fingere Caelius podagram.*

—MART. vii. *Epig.* xxxviii. 8.

So much the care and cunning can of paine:  
*Caelius* (growne gowty) leaves the gowt to faine.

As farre as I remember, I have read a like History in some place of *Appian*, of one who purposing

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXV

How a man  
should not  
counterfeit to  
be sicke

to escape the proscriptions of the *Triumvirat of Rome*, and to conceale himselfe from the knowledge of those who pursued him, kept himselfe close and disguised, adding this other invention to it, which was to counterfeit blindnes in one eye, who when he came somewhat to recover his liberty, and would have left off the plaister he had long time worne over his eyes, he found that under that mask he had altogether lost the sight of it. It may be the action of his sight was weakned, having so long continued without exercise and the [visual] vertue was wholly converted into the other eye: For, we may plainly perceive, that holding one eye shut, it conuaieth some part of it's effect into his fellow; in such sort as it will swell and growe bigger. As also the idlenes, together with the warmth of the medicaments and swathing, might very wel draw some goutie humor into the legge of *Martials* goutie fellow. Reading in *Froisart*, the vow which a gallant troupe of young Englishmen had made, to weare their left eyes hudwink't, untill such time as they should passe into *France*, and there performe some notable exploite of armes upon us, I have often laughed with my selfe to think what they would have imagined, if as to the fore aleaged, it had hapned to them, and had all beene blind of the left eye, at what time they returned to look upon their mistresses, for whose sake they had made their vowe and undertaken such an enterprise. Mothers have great reason to chide their children when they counterfeit to be blind with one eye, crompt-backe, squint-eyed, or lame, and such other deformities of the body; for besides that the body thus tender may easily receive some ill custome, I know not how, it seemeth that fortune is glad to take us at our word; And I have heard diverse examples of some, who have falen sicke in very deede, because they had purposed to faine sick-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

nes. I have at all times enured my selfe, whether I be on horsebacke or a foote, to carry a good heaue wand or cudgell in my hand; yea I have endeouored to doe it handsomely, and with an affected kinde of countenance to continue so. Many have threatned me, that fortune will one time or other turne this my wantonnes into necessitie. I presume upon this, that I should be the first of my race, that ever was troubled with the gowt. But lett us somewhat amplifie this chapter, and patch it up with another piece concerning blindnes. *Plinie* reports of one, who dreaming in his sleepe, that he was blind, awaking the next morning, was found to be starke blinde, having never had any precedent sickenes. The power of imagination may very well further such things, as elsewhere I have shewed; And *Plinie* seemeth to bee of this opinion; but it is more likely, that the motions, which the body felt inwardly (wherof Physitians, may if they please, finde out the cause) and which tooke away his sight, were the occasion of his dreame. Let us also adde another storie, concerning this purpose, which *Seneca* reporteth in his Epistles. *Thou knowest (saith he writing unto Lucilius) that Harpastes my wifes foole, is left upon me as an hereditarie charge; for by mine owne nature, I am an enemie unto such monsters, and if I have a desire to laugh at a foole, I neede not seeke one farre; I laugh at my selfe. This foolish woman hath sodainly lost hir sight. I report a strange thing, but yet very true: She will not beleeeve she is blind; and urgeth her keeper uncessantly to lead her, saying still, my house is very darke. What we laugh at in hir, I entreat thee to beleeeve, that the same hapneth to each for us. No man knoweth himselfe to be covetous, or niggardly. Even the blind require a guide, but wee stray from our selves. I am not ambitious, say we, but no man can live otherwise at Rome: I am not sumptuous, but the Cittie requireth great*

CHAPTER  
XXV

How a man  
should not  
counterfeit to  
be sicke



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XXV

How a man  
should not  
counterfeit to  
be sicke

*charges. It is not my fault, if I be colerike: If I have not yet set downe a sure course of my life, the fault is in youth. Let us not seeke our evill out of us; it is within us, it is rooted in our entrailes. And only because we perceive not that we are sick, makes our recoverie to prove more difficult. If we beginne not betimes to cure our selves, when shall we provide for so many sores, for so many evils? Yet have we a most sweete and gentle medicine of Philosophy; for of others, no man feesles the pleasure of them, but after his recoverie, whereas she pleaseth, easeth, and cureth all at once. Lo here what Seneca saith, who hath some what diverted me from my purpose: But there is profit in the exchange.*

## THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER

### *Of Thumbs*



*ACITUS* reporteth, that amongst certaine barbarous Kings, for the confirmation of an inviolable bonde, or covenant, their manner was, to joyne their right hands close and hard together, with enterlacing their thumbs: And when by hard wringing them the blood appeared at their ends, they pricked them with some sharp point, and then mutually entersuck't each one the others. Phisicians say, thumbs are the master-fingers of the hand, and that their Latine Etymologie is derived of *Pollere*. The Græcians cal it ἀντιχείρ, as a man would say, another hand. And it seemeth, the Latins likewise take them sometimes in this sense, *id est*, for a whole hand:

*Sed nec vocibus excitata blandis,  
Molli pollice nec rogata surgit.*

—MART. xii. *Epigram. xcix. 8.*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

It wil not rise, though with sweet words excited,  
Nor with the touch of softest thumb invited.

CHAPTER  
XXVI

Of Thumbs

In *Rome* it was heretofore a signe of favor, to wring  
and kisse the thumbs.

*Fautor utroque tum laudabit pollice ludum :*  
—HOR. i. *Epist.* xviii. 66.

He that applaudes will praise,  
With both his thumbs, thy plaies.

and of disfavour or disgrace to lift them up, and turne  
them outward :

—*converso pollice vulgi*  
*Quemlibet occidunt populariter.*—JUVEN. *Sat.* lii. 36.

When people turne their thumbs away,  
They popularly any slay.

Such as were hurt or maymed in their thumbs,  
were by the Romanes dispensed from going to warre, as  
they who had lost their weapons holdfast. *Augustus*  
did confiscate all the goods of a *Romane* Knight, who  
through malice had cut off the thumbes of two yong  
children of his, thereby to excuse them from going to  
warre : And before him, the Senate in the time of the  
Italian warres, had condemned *Cuius Patienus* to per-  
petuall prison, and confiscated all his goods, forso-  
much as he had willingly cut off the thumb of his  
left hand, so to exempt himselfe from the voyage.  
Some one, whose name I remember not, having  
gained a great victory by Sea, caused al the enemies  
whom he had vanquished and taken prisoners, to have  
their thumbs cut off, thinking thereby to deprive  
them of all meanes of fighting, of rowing, or hand-  
ling their oares. The Athenians likewise caused  
them to be cut off from them of *Agina*, to take  
from them the preheminance in the art of navigation.  
In *Lacedæmon* masters punished their Schollers by  
byting their thumbs.

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER

*Cowardize, the mother of Crueltie*

### CHAPTER XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie



HAVE often heard it reported, that *Cowardize is the mother of Crueltie*: And have perceived by experience, that this malicious sharpnes, and inhumane severitie of corage, is commonly accompanied with feminine remissenesse: I have seene some of the cruelest subject to weep easily, and for frivolous causes. *Alexander* the tyrant of *Pheres*, could not endure to see tragedies acted in the Theaters, for feare his subjects should see him sob and weepe at the misfortunes of *Hecuba* and *Andromaca*; he who without remorse or pittie caused daily so many poore people to be most cruelly massacred and barbarously murthered. May it be weaknesse of spirit, makes them so pliable to all extremities? valor (whose effect is onely to exercise it selfe against resistance,

*Nec nisi bellantis gaudet cervice juvenci.*

—CLAUD. *Epist. ad Hadr. v. 30.*

Nor takes he joy to domineere  
But on the necke of sturdie steere)

refraines it selfe in seeing her enemy prostrate to her mercy: But pusillanimitie, to say that she also is of the feaste, since it cannot bee joyned to the first part, takes for her share the second, which is massacre and blood. Murthers after victories, are commonly effected by the baser kinde of people, and officers that waite upon the baggage and cariage. And the reason we see so many unheard-of cruelties in popular warres, is, that this vulgar rascalitie doth martially flesh and enure it selfe to dive in blood up to the



## THE SECOND BOOKE

elbowes, and mangle a bodie, or hacke a carcase lying  
and groveling at their feete, having no manner of  
feeling of other valor.

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

*Et Lupus et turpes instant morientibus Urxi.*

*Et quicumque minor nobilitate fera est.*

—Ovid, *Trist.* iii. *El.* v. 35.

A Wolfe or filthie Beare the dying man oppress,  
Or some such beast as in nobilitie is lesse.

As the Craven Curses, which at home or in their  
Kennels will tugge and bite the skins of those wilde  
beastes, which in the fields they durst not so much  
as bark-at. What is that now adaies makes all our  
quarrels mortall? And whereas our forefathers had  
some degree of revenge, we now beginne by the last;  
and at first brunt nothing is spoken of but killing?  
What is it, if it be not cowardise? Every man seeth,  
it is more bravery and disdaine for one to beat his  
emie, than make an end of him; and to keep him  
at a bay, than make him die. Moreover, that the  
desire of revenge is thereby alayed: and better con-  
tented; for, it aymeth at nothing so much as to give  
or shew a motion or feeling of revenge onely of her  
self. And that's the reason we do not challenge a  
beast, or fall upon a stone, when it hurts us, because  
they are incapable to feele our revenge. And to kill  
a man, is to shelter him from our offence. And even  
as *Bias*, exclaimed upon a wicked man; *I know that  
soone or late thou shalt bee punished for thy lewdnes,  
but I feare me I shall not see it:* And moaned the  
Orchomenians, because the penance which *Laciscus*  
had for his treason committed against them, came at  
such a time, as none of them were living, whom it had  
concerned, and whom the pleasure of that punish-  
ment might most delight: So ought revenge to  
be moaned, when he on whom it is inflicted, looseth  
the meanes to endure or feele it. For, even as

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

the revenger, will see the action of the revenge, that so he may feele the pleasure of it, so must he on whom he is revenged, both see and feele, that he may hereby receive both repentance and griefe. He shal rew it, say we. And though he receive a stab or a blow with a pistoll on his head, shal we think he will repent? Contrariwise, if we marke him wel, we shal perceive that in falling, he makes a moe or bob at us. Hee is farre from repenting, when he rather seemes to be beholding to us: In as-much as we affoord him the favourablest office of life, which is to make him dye speedily and as it were insensibly. We are left to shift up and downe, runne and trot, and squat heere and there, and al to avoyd the officers, or escape the Magistrates that pursue us; and he is at rest. *To kill a man, is good to escape a future offence, and not revenge the wrongs past.* It is rather an action of feare, than of bravery: Of precaution, than of courage: Of defence, than of an enterprise. It is apparant, that by it, we quit both the true end of revenge, and the respect of our reputation: If he live we feare he wil or may charge us with the like. It is not against him, it is for thee, thou riddest thy selfe of him. In the Kingdome of *Narsinga*, this expedient would be bootelesse: There, not only Souldiers, and such as professe armes, but every meane Artificer, decide their quarels with the Swords point. The King never refuseth any man the combate, that is disposed to fight: and if they be men of qualitie he wil be by in person, and reward the victor with a chaine of Gold: Which, who-soever hath a mind unto, and wil obtaine it, may freely challenge him that weareth the same, and enter combate with him. And having overcome one combate, hath many following the same. If we thought by vertue to be ever superiors unto our enemy, and at our pleasure gourmandize him, it



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### CHAPTER XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

would much grieve us he should escape us, as he doth in dying: We rather endeavour to vanquish surely then honourably. And in our quarrels we rather seeke for the end, then for the glory. *Asinius Pollio* for an honest man, lesse excusable, committed a like fault; Who having written many invectives against *Plancus*, staid untill he were dead to publish them. It was rather to flurt at a blind man, and raile in a dead mans eare, and to offend a senselesse man, then incurre the danger of his revenge. And men answered in this behalfe, that *it onely belonged to Hobgoblins to wrestle with the dead*. He who stayeth till the Author be dead, whose writings he will combate, what saith he, but that he is weake and quarrellous? It was told *Aristotle*, that some body had spoken ill of him, to whom he answered, *Let him also rehippe me, so my selfe be not by*. Our forefathers were content to revenge an injurie with a lie; a lie with a blowe, a blowe with bloud; and so in order. They were sufficiently valiant, not to feare their adversary, though he lived and were wronged: whereas we quake for feare, so long as we see him a foot. And that it is so, doth not our moderne practize, pursue to death, as well him who hath wronged us, as him whom we have offended? It is also a kind of dastardlinesse, which hath brought this fashion into our single combates, to accompany us in the fields with seconds, thirdes, and fourths. They were anciently single combates, but now they are skirmishes and battels. To be alone, feared the first that invented it: *Quum in se cuique minimum fiducia esset*. When every man had least confidence in himselfe. For, what company soever it be, it doth naturally bring some comfort and ease in danger. In ancient time they were wont to employ third persons as sticklers, to see no trechery or disorder were used, and to beare witnes of the combates suc-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

cesse. But now this fashion is come up, let any man be engaged whosoever is envited, cannot well containe himselfe to be a spectator, lest it be imputed unto him, it is either for want of affection, or lacke of courage. Besides the injustice of such an action and villany, for your honours protection, to engage other valour and force then your owne, I find it a disadvantage in an honest and worthy man, and who wholly trusts unto himselfe, to entermingle his fortune with a second man: every one runneth sufficient hazard for himselfe, and neede not also runne it for another: And hath enough to doe, to assure himselfe of his owne vertue for the defence of his life, without committing so precious a thing into third-mens-hands. For, if the contrary hath not expresly beene covenanted of all foure, it is a combined party. If your fellow chance to faile, you have two upon you, and not without reason: and to say, it is a Superchiery, as it is indeed: as being wel armed, to charge a man who hath but a piece of a sword, or being sound and strong, to set upon a man sore hurt. But if they bee advantages you have gotten fighting, you may use them without imputation. Disparitie is not considered, and inequality is not balanced, but by the state wherein the fight is begun. As of the rest you must rely on fortune: and if alone or single, you chance to have three upon you, your other two companions being slain, you have no more wrong done you, than I should offer in Wars in striking an enemy, whom at such an advantage I should finde grapled with one of my fellow-souldiers. The nature of societie beareth, where troupe is against troupe (as where our Duke of *Orleans* chalenged *Hen. King of England*, one hundred against another hundred; three hundred against as many, as did the *Argians* against the

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Lacedemonians; three to three, as were the *Horatii* against the *Curatii*) the pluralitie of either side is never respected for more than a single man. Whersoever there is company, the hazard is confused and disordered. I have a private interest in this discourse. For, my brother, the Lord of *Matecoulom*, being desired in *Rome*, to second and accompany a Gentleman, with whom he had no great acquaintance, who was defendant and chalenged by another; The fight begunne, my brother by chance found himselfe confronted with one neerer and better known to him (I would faine be resolved of these Lawes of honor, which so often shooke and trouble those of reason) whom after he had vanquished and dispatched, seeing the two principals of the quarrell yet standing and unhurt, he went to reskew his fellow. What could he do lesse? should he have stood still, and (if chance would so have had it) see him defeated, for whose defence he was entred the quarrel? What until then he had done, was nothing to the purpose, and the quarrel was still undecided. Al the courtesie you can, you ought surely use to your enemy, especially when you have brought him under, and to some great disadvantage; I know not how a man may use it, when anothers interest depends on it, where you are but accessory, and where the quarrel is not yours. Hee could never be just nor curteous, in hazard of him unto whom he had lent himselfe. So was he presently delivered out of the Italian prisons, by a speedy and solemne letter of commendations from our King. Oh indiscreet Nation. We are not contented to manifest our follies, and bewray our vices to the world by reputation: but we go into forraigne Nations and there in person shew them. Place three French-men in the deserts of *Libya*, and they wil never live one moneth together without brawling, falling out and scratching one

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

another: you would say this peregrination, is a party erected to please strangers with our tragedies; and those most commonly, who rejoyce and scoffe at our evils. We travel into *Italie* to learne the art of fencing, and practise it at the cost of our lives, before we know it; it were requisite according to the order of true Discipline, we should preferre the Theorike before the practike. We betray our apprenticeship.

*Primitiæ juvenum miseræ, bellicque futuri  
Dura rudimenta.*—STAT. *Sylv.* v.

The miserable first essayes of youth,  
And hard beginnings of warre that ensu'th.

I know it is an art profitable to her end (in the single combate betweene the two Princes, cosin-Germans, in *Spaine*, the eldest of which (saith *T. Livius*) by the skil of his weapons, and by craft, overcame easily the dismayed forces of the yonger) and as by experience I have knowen, the knowledge and skil wherof, hath puffed up the heart of some, beyond their naturall proportion. But it is not properly a vertue, since she draweth her stay from dexteritie, and takes her foundation from other than from her selfe. *The honour of combates consisteth in the jealousie of the heart, not of the science.* And therefore have I seene some of my friends, renowned for great Masters in this exercise in their quarels to make choise of weapons, that might well take the meane of this advantage, or oddes from them; and which wholly depended on fortune, and assurance that their victorie might not rather be imputed to their fencing, than ascribed to their valour. And in my infancy, our nobility scorned the reputation of a fencer, though never so cunning, as injurious; and if any learnt it, they would sequester themselves from company, deeming the same as a mystery of craft and subtilty, derogating from true and perfect vertue.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Non schivar, non parar, non ritirarsi  
Vogliono, costor, ne qui destrezza ha parte;  
Non danno i colpi finti hor pieni, hor scarai;  
Tuglie l'ira e il furor l'uso dell' arte,  
Odie le spade horribilmente utarsi  
A mezzo il ferro, il pie d'orma non parte,  
Sempre è il pie fermo, è la man sempre in moto,  
Ne scende taglio in van, ne punta il voto.*

—TASSO, *Gier. can. xii. stan. 55.*

### CHAPTER XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

*T<sup>o</sup> avoyde, toward retiring to give ground  
They reke not, nor hath nimblenes heere part,  
Nor give false blowes, nor full, nor scarce, nor sound,  
Rage and revenge bereave all use of arte.  
Their Swordes at halfe Sword horribly resound  
You might heare mette: No foote from steppe doth parte:  
Their foote still fast, their hand still faster mooveth:  
No stroke in vaine, no thrust in vaine, but prooveth.*

*Shooting at Buts, Tilting, Torneyes, Barriers, the true images of martiall combates, were the exercises of our forefathers.* This other exercise is so much the less noble, by how much it respecteth but a private end; which against the lawes of justice, teacheth us to destroy one another, and every way produceth ever mischievous effects. *It is much more worthy, and better beseeming, for a man to exercise himselfe in things that assure and offend not our Commonwealt; and which respect publike securitie and generall glory.* Publius [Rutilius, Consul] was the first that ever instituted the Souldier to manage his armes by dexteritie and skil, and joyned art unto vertue, not for the use of private contentions, but for the wars and Roman peoples quarrels. A popular and civill manner of fencing. And besides the example of *Cæsar*, who appointed his Souldier, above all things, to aime and strike at the face of *Pompey's* men in the battell of *Pharsalia*: A thousand other Chieftaines and Generals have devised new fashions of weapons, and new kindes of striking, and covering of themselves, according as the present affaires

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

require. But even as *Philopæmen* condemned wrestling, wherein hee excelled others, forsomuch as the preparations appertaining to this exercise differed from those that belong to military discipline, to which he supposed, men of honour should amuse and addict themselves. Me thinks also, that this nimblenesse or agilitie, to which men fashion and enure themselves, their limbes, their turnings, windings, and nimble-quick motions, wherein youth is instructed and trained in this new schoole, are not onely unprofitable, but rather contrary and damageable for the use of militarie combate: And we see our men do commonly employ particular weapons, in their fence schooles, and peculiarly appointed for that purpose. And I have seene it disallowed, that a gentleman chalenged to fight with Rapier and Dagger, should present himselfe in the equipage of a man at armes; or that another should offer to come with his cloake insteade of a Dagger. It is worthy the noting, that *Lachaz* in *Plato*, speaking of an apprentissage, how to manage armes, conformable to ours, saith, he could never see any notable warrior come of a schoole of fence, and especially from among the maisters. As for them our owne experience confirmes as much. And for the rest we may at least say, they are sufficiencies of no relation or correspondency. And in the institution of the children of his Common wealth, *Plato* interdicts the artes of striking or playing with fists, devised by *Amycus* and *Epeius*, and to wrestle invented by *Anthæus* and *Cecyo*: because they aime at another end, then to adapt youth to warlike service, and have no affinitie with it. But I digresse much from my theame. The Emperour *Mauricius*, being forewarned by dreames, and sundry prognostications, that one *Phocas* a Souldier at that time yet unknowne, should kil him, demanded of



## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Philip* his sonne in law, who that *Phocas* was, his nature, his conditions, and customes, and how amongst other things *Philip* told him, he was a faint cowardly, and timorous fellow: The Emperour thereby presently concluded, that he was both cruel and a murtherer. What makes tyrants so bloud-thirstie? it is the care of their securitie, and that their faint-hart yeelds them no other meanes to assure themselves, then by rooting out those which may in any sort offend them; yea silly women, for feare they should or bite or scratch them;

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

*Cuncta ferit dum cuncta timet.*

—CLAUD, in *Entrop.* l. 182.

Of all things he afraide,  
At all things fiercely laide.

The first cruelties are exercised by themselves, thence proceedeth the feare of a just revenge, which afterward produceth a swarme of new cruelties; by the one to stifle the other. *Philip*, the King of *Macedon*, who had so many crowes to pul with the Romanes, agitated by the horror of so many murthers committed by his appointment, and unable to make his partie good, or to take any safe resolution against so many families, by him at severall times injured, resolved at last to seize upon al their children whom he had caused to be murdered, that so he might day by day one after another rid the world of them, and so establish his safety. *Matters of worth are not impertinent wheresoever they be placed.* I, who rather respect the weight and benefite of discourses, then their order and placing, need not feare to place here at randome a notable storie. When they are so rich of their owne beautie, and may very well uphold themselves alone, I am content with a hairens end, to fitte or joyne them to my purpose. Amongst others who had beene con-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

demned by *Philip*, was one *Herodicus*, Prince of the Thessalians: After whom he caused his two sonnes in lawe to be put to death; each of them leaving a young sonne behind him. *Theoxena* and *Arco* were the two widdowes. *Theoxena* although she were instantly urged thereunto, could never be induced to marry againe. *Arco* tooke to husband *Poris* a chiefe man amongst the *Ænians*, and by him had divers children, all which she left very young. *Theoxena* moved by a motherly charitie toward her young nephews, and so to have them in her protection and bringing up, wedded *Poris*. Upon this came out the proclamation of the Kings Edict. This noble-minded mother, distrusting the Kings crueltie and fearing the mercilesnes of his Satelities or officers towards these noble, hopefull and tender youths, feared not to say, that shee would rather kil them with her own hands, then deliver them. *Poris* amazed at her protestations, promiseth her secretly to convey them to *Athens*, ther by some of his faithful friends to be kept safely. They take occasion of a yearely feast, which to the honor of *Æneas* was solemnized at *Ænea*, and thither they goe, where having all day-long assisted to the ceremonies, and publike banquet: night being come, they convay themselves into a shippe appointed for that purpose, in hope to save themselves by Sea. But the winde fell out so contrarie, that the next morning they found themselves in view of the town, whence the night before they had hoised sailes, where they were pursued by the guarders and Souldiers of the Port. Which *Poris* perceiving, laboured to hasten and encourage the Mariners to shift away: But *Theoxena*, [enraged] through love and revenge, remembring her first resolution, prepared both weapons and poison, and presenting them to their sight, thus shee bespake them: Oh my deare

## THE SECOND BOOKE

children, take a good heart, death is now the onely  
meane of your defence and libertie, and shall be a  
just cause unto the Gods for their holy justice.  
These bright-keene blades, these full cuppes shall  
free you the passage unto it. Courage therefore,  
and thou my eldest childe, take this sword to die  
the strongest death. Who on the one side having  
so undaunted a perswader, and on the other their  
enemies ready to cut their throats, in furious manner  
ranne all to that which came next to his hand. And  
so all goared and panting were throwne into the Sea.  
*Theoxena*, proud she had so gloriouslie provided for  
her childrens safety, lovingly embracing her husband,  
saide thus unto him; Oh my deare heart, let us  
follow these boyes, and together with them enjoy  
one selfe same grave; and so close-claspe together,  
they flung themselves into the maine: So that the  
ship was brought to shoare againe, but emptie of  
her Maisters. Tyrants to act two things together,  
that is, to kill and cause their rage to be felt, have  
employed the utmost of their skill, to devise lingring  
deaths. They wil have their enemies die, yet not so  
soone, but that they may have leisure to feele their  
vengeance. Wherin they are in great perplexity:  
for if the torments be over-violent, they are short;  
if lingring, not grievous inough. In this they imploy  
their wits and devises. Many examples wherof we  
see in antiquitie; and I wot not, whether wittingly  
we retaine some spice of that barbarisme. *What-  
soever is beyond a simple death, seemeth to mee meere  
crueltie.* Our justice cannot hope, that he whom the  
terror of death cannot dismay, be he to be hanged or  
beheaded, can in any sort be troubled with the imagin-  
ation of a languishing fire, of a wheele, or of burning  
pincers. And I wot not, whether in that meane time  
we bring him to despaire: For, what plight can the  
soule of a man be in, that is broken upon a wheele,

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardise,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

or after the old fashion, nailed upon a Crosse, and xxiiii howres together expects his death? *Josephus* reporteth, that whilst the *Romane* warres continued in *Jurie*, passing by a place where certain Jewes had been crucified three dayes before, he knew thre of his friends amongst them, and having gotten leave to remove them, two of them died, but the third lived long after. *Chalcondylas* a man of credite, in the memories he left of matters happened in his time and thereabouts, maketh report of an extreame torment, the Emperor *Mechmed* was often wont to put in practise, which was by one onely blow of a Cimitary or broad Persian Sword, to have men cut in two parts, by the waste of the body, about the Diaphragma, which is a membrane lying overthwart the lower part of the breast, separating the heart and lights from the stomacke, which caused them to dye two deaths at once: and affirmeth that both parts were seen full of life, to move and stirre long time after, as if they had been in lingring torment. I do not thinke, they felt any great torture in that moving. *The gastliest torments to looke upon are not alwaies the greatest to be endured:* And I finde that much more fiercely-horrible, which other Historians write, and which he used against certain Lords of *Epirus*, whom faire and leasurely he caused to be flead all over, disposed by so malicious a dispensation, that their lives continued fifteene daies in that languor and anguish. And these two others: *Cræsus* having caused a Gentleman to be apprehended, greatly favoured by *Pantaleon* his brother: led him in a fullers or cloth-workers shoppe, where with Cardes and Teazels belonging to that trade, he made him to be carded, scraped, and teazled so long untill he died of it. *George Sechell* Ring-leader of the Country men of *Polina*, who under the title of a *Croysada*, wrought so many mischiefes, having



## THE SECOND BOOKE

beene defeated in a battell by the *Vayvoda* of *Transilvania*, and taken Prisoner, was for three dayes together tyed naked to a wooden-horse, exposed to all manner of tortures, any man might devise against him; during which time divers other prisoners were kept fasting. At last, he yet living, saw *Lucat* his deare brother, and for whose safety he sued and entreated, forced to drinke his blood, drawing all the envie and hatred of his misdeedes upon himselfe. And twentie of his most favoured Captaines were compelled to feed upon his flesh, which with their teeth they must teare off, and swallow their morsels. The rest of his body and entrailes, he being dead, were boiled in a pan, and given for food to other of his followers.

CHAPTER  
XXVII

Cowardize,  
the mother of  
Crueltie

### THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER

*All things have their season*



HOSE who compare *Cato* the Censor, to *Cato* the yonger that killed himselfe, compare two notable natures, and in forme neare one unto another. The first exploited his, sundrie waies, and excelleth in military exploits, and utilitie of his publike vacations. But the yongers vertue (besides that it were blasphemy, in vigor to compare any unto him) was much more sincere and unspotted. For, who will discharge the Censors of envie and ambition, that durst counter-checke the honor of *Scipio*, in goodnes and all other parts of excellencie, farre greater and better than him or any other man living in his age? Amongst other things reported of him, this is one, that in his eldest yeares he gave himselfe, with so earnest a

## THE SECOND BOOKE

The longest of my desseignes doth not extend to a whole yeare; now I only apply my selfe to make an end: I shake off all my new hopes and enterprises: I bid my last farewell to all the places I leave, and daily dispossesse my selfe of what I have. *Olim jam nec perit quicquam mihi, nec acquiritur. Plus superest viatici quam viæ* (SEN. *Epist.* lxxvii. p.). *It is a good while since I neither loose nor get any thing; I have more to beare my charges, then way to goe.*

CHAPTER  
XXVIII

—  
All things  
have their  
season

*Vixi, et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* iv. 653.

I have liv'd, and the race have past,  
Wherein my fortune had me plac't.

To conclude, it is all the ease I finde in my age, and that it suppresseth many cares and desires in me, wherewith life is much disquieted. The care of the worlds course, the care of riches, of greatnesse, of knowledge, of health and of my selfe. This man learneth to speake, when he should rather learne to hold his peace for ever. A man may alwaies continue his studie, but not schooling. O fond-foolish for an old man to be ever an *Abcedarian*.

*Diversos diversa juvant, non omnibus annis  
Omnia conveniunt.*—CATUL. *Eleg.* i. 103.

Diverse delights to diverse, nor to all  
Do all things at all yeares convenient fall.

If we must needs study, let us study something sorteaable to our condition, that we may answer, as he did, who being demanded what his studies would stead him in his decrepity, answered; *that he might the better, and with more ease leave this world.* Such a studie was yong *Catoes*, in fore-feeling his approaching end, who lighting upon *Platoes* discourse of the soules immortality. Not, as it may be supposed, that



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXVIII

All things  
have their  
season

long before he had not stored himselfe with all sorts of munition for such a dislodging. Of assurance, of constancy and instruction, he had more than *Plato* hath in all his writings: His Science, and his courage, were in this respect above all Philosophy. Hee undertooke this occupation, not for the service of his death, but as one, who did not so much as interrupt his sleep, in a deliberation of such consequence, who ever without choise or change continued his wonted studies, and all other accustomed actions of his life. The same night, wherein the Pretorship was refused him, he passed over in play. That wherein he must die, he spent in reading. The losse of life or office was all one to him.

### THE TWENTY-NINTH CHAPTER

#### *Of Vertue*



FINDE by experience, that there is great difference betweene the sodaine fits and fantasies of the soule, and a resolute disposition and constant habitude: And I see, there is nothing but we may attaine unto, yea, as some say, to exceede Divinitie it selfe; forsomuch as it is more to become impassible of himselfe, then to be so by his originall condition: And that one may joyne a resolution and assurance of God to mans imbecillitie. But it is by fits. And in the lives of those Heroes or noble worthies of former ages, are often found wonderfull parts, and which seeme greatly to exceed our naturall forces: but they are pranks or parts consonant to truth: and it may hardly be believed, mans soule may so be tainted and fed with those so high-raised conditions that unto it they may become



## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XXIX

Of Vertue

as ordinary and naturall. It hapneth unto our selves, who are but abortive broods of men, sometimes to rowze our soule farre beyond her ordinary pitch, as stirred up by the discourses, or provoked by the examples of others. But it is a kinde of passion, which urgeth, mooveth, agitateth and in some sorte ravisheth her from out her selfe: for, that gust overblowne, and storme past, wee see, it wil unawares unbend and lose it selfe, if not to the lowest pitch, at least to be no more the same she was, so that upon every slight occasion, for a bird lost, or for a glasse broken, wee suffer our selves to be mooved and dis-tempered very neere as one of the vulgar sort.

*Except order, moderation and constancie, I imagine all things may bee done by an indifferent and defective man.* ✓

Therefore say wisemen, that directly to judge of a man, his common actions must specially be controuled, and he must every day be surprised in his workday clothes. *Pyrrho*, who framed so pleasant a Science of ignorance, assaied (as all other true Philosophers) to fashion his life answerable to his doctrine. And forasmuch as he maintained the weakenesse of mans judgement, to be so extreame, as it could take nor resolution, nor inclination: and would perpetually suspend it, ballancing, beholding and receiving all things, as indifferent: It is reported of him, that he ever kept himselfe after one fashion, looke and countenance: If he had begunne a discourse, he would end it, though the party to whom he spake, were gone: And if he went any where, he would not goe an inche out of his path what let or obstackle soever came in his way; being kept from falls, from cartes or other accidents by his friends. For, to feare or shunne any thing, had beene to shooke his propositions, which remooved all election and certainty from his very senses. He sometimes suffered himselfe to be cut and cautherized, with such constancy, as he

constancy of  
a sceptic

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXIX

Of Vertue

was never seen so much as to shrug, twitch, move or winke with his eyes. It is something to bring the minde to these imaginations, but more to joine the effects unto it, yet it is not impossible. But to joine them with such perseverance and constancy, as to establish it for an ordinary course; verily in these enterprises so farre from common use, it is almost incredible to be done. The reason is this, that he was sometimes found in his house, bitterly scolding with his sister, for which being reproved, as he that wronged his indifferencie: What? said he; *must this seely woman also serve as a witnesse to my rules?* Another time, being found to defend himselfe from a dog: *It is* (replied he) *very hard, altogether to dispoile and shake off man:* And man must endeavour and enforce himselfe to resist and confront all things, first by effects, but if the worst befall, by reason and by discourse. It is now about seaven or eight yeares since, that a country man, yet living, not above two leagues from this place, having long before beene much vexed and troubled in minde, for his wives jealousie; one day comming home from his worke, and she after her accustomed manner welcomming and entertaining him with brawling and scowlding, as one unable to endure her any longer, fell into such a moodie rage, that sodainely with a Sickle, which he held in his hand, he clean cut off those parts that were the cause of her jealousie, and flung them in her face. And it is reported, that a yong gentleman of *France*, amorous and lustie, having by his perseverance at last mollified the heart of his faire mistress, desperate, because comming to the point of his so long sued-for businesse, he found himselfe unable and unprepared, and that

—non viriliter

*Iners senile penis extulerat caput,*

—TIB. ad Priap. v. 4.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

as soone as he came home, he deprived himselfe of CHAPTER  
XXIX  
Of Vertue  
it: and sent it as a cruel and bloody sacrifice for the  
expiation of his offence. Had he done it by discourse  
or for religions sake, as the priestes of *Cybele* were  
wont to do, what might we not say of so haughty an  
enterprise? Not long since at *Bragerac*, five leagues-  
distance from my house, up the river of *Dordaigne*,  
a woman, having the evening before beene grievously  
tormented, and sore beaten by hir husband: froward  
and skittish by complexion, determined, though it  
should cost hir the price of hir life, by one meane or  
other, to escape his rudenesse, and rising the next  
morning, went as she was accustomed to visite her  
neighbours, to whom in some sort she recommended  
the state of hir affaires, then taking a sister of hers by  
the hand, ledde hir along untill she came upon the  
bridge that crosseth the River, and having bid her  
hartily farewell; as in the way of sport without shew-  
ing any maner of change or alteration, headlong threw  
hirselle down into the River, where she perished.  
And which is more to be noted in hir, is, that this  
hir determination ripened a whole night in hir head.  
But the Indian Wives, may not here be forgotten as  
worthy the noting: Whose custome is, that husbands  
have many wives and for hir that is dearest unto hir  
husband, to kil hirselle after him: Every one in the  
whole course of hir life, endevoreth to obtaine this  
priviledge and advantage over all her fellow-wives:  
And in the good offices and duties they shew their  
husbands, respect no other recompence than to be  
preferred to accompany them in death:

*Ubi mortifero jacta est fax ultima lecto,*

—*Uxorum furia, stat pia turba comis:*

*Et certamen habent Lethi, quæ civa sequatur*

—*Conjugium, pudor est non licuisse mori:*

*Ardent victrices, et flammæ pectora præbent,*

—*Imponuntque suis ora perusta viris.*

—PROPERT. III. El. xli. 17.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXIX

#### Of Vertue

When for his death-bed last flame is appli'd  
With loose haire many kind wives stand beside,  
And strive for death, which alive may be next  
Hir wedlocke, who may not, is sham'd and vex't.  
They that orecome, are burn'd, to flames give way,  
Their bodies burnt on their burnt husbands lay.

A late Writer affirmeth, that himselfe hath seene this custome highly reputed in the new discovered East Indiaes, where not only the wives are buried with their husbands, but also such slaves as he hath enjoyed; which is done after this manner. The husband being deceased, the widdow may, if she will (but few do it) request two or three Monthes space to dispose of hir busines. The day come, adorned as a sumptuous bride, she mounteth on horsbacke, and with a cheereful countenance, telleth every body she is going to lie with her bride groome, holding in her left hand a looking-glasse, and an arrow in the right. Thus having a while rid up and downe in great pomp and magnificence, accompanied with her friends and kinsmen, and much concourse of people, in feast and jollitie, she is brought unto a publike place, purposely appointed for such spectacles. Which is a large open place, in the midst whereof is a pit or grave full of wood, and neere unto it an upraised scaffold, with foure or five steppes to ascend, upon which she is brought, and served with a stately and sumptuous banket, which ended, she beginneth to dance and sing, and when she thinks good, commandeth the fire to be kindled. That done, she commeth down againe, and taking the nearest of hir husbands kindred by the hand, they goe together to the next river, where shee strippes hir selfe all naked, and distributeth hir jewels and cloathes among hir friends, then plungeth herselfe in the Water, as if she meant to wash away hir sins; then comming out she enwrappeth her selfe in a yellow piece of linnen

## THE SECOND BOOKE

cloth, about the length of fourteene yards; And giving her hand againe unto hir husbands Kins-man, they returne unto the Mount, where she speaks unto the people, to whom (if she have any) she recommendeth hir Children. Betweene the Pitte and Mount, there is commonly a Curtaine drawne, lest the sight of that burning furnace might dismay them: Which many, to shew the greater courage, wil not have it drawne. Her speech ended, a Woman presenteth her with a Vessell full of Oyl, therewith to annoint her head and body, which done, she casteth the rest into the fire, and therewithall sodainly flings herselfe into it: Which is no sooner done, but the people cast great store of Faggots and Billets upon hir, lest she should languish over-long: and all their joy is converted into grieffe and sorrow. If they be persons of meane quality, the dead mans body is carried to the place where they intend to bury him, and there he is placed sitting; his Widdow kneeling before him with her armes close about his middle, and so keepeth himself, whilest a wall is erected up about them both, which raised to the height of her shoulders, some of her kindred taking her by the head behind, wrings hir neck about; and having given the last gaspe, the wall is immediately made up close over their heads, wherein they remain buried. In the same Country, there was something like to this in their Gymnosophists, or wise-men, who not by menaces or compulsions of others, nor by the violence of a sodaine humour, but by the expresse and voluntary profession of their rule, their maner was according as they attained unto a certaine age, or saw themselves threatned by some sicknesse, to cause a pile of wood to be erected, and upon it a rich bedde; and having cheerefully feasted their friends and acquaintance, with such a resolution laid themselves downe in that bed, that fire set unto it,

CHAPTER  
XXIX

Of Vertue □



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXIX

#### Of Vertue

they were never seene to stirre nor hand nor foot; and thus died one of them, named *Calanus*, in the presence of all the army of *Alexander* the Great. And who had not so made himselfe away, was neither esteemed holy nor absolutely happy among them; sending his soule purged and purified by fire, after it had consumed whatsoever was mortal and terrestrial in it. This constant premeditation of al the life, is that which makes the wonder. Amongst our other disputation, that of *Fatum*, hath much entermedled it selfe: and to joyne future things, and our wil it selfe unto a certaine unavoydable necessity, we yet stand upon that argument of former times: since God foreseeth al things must thus happen as undoubtedly he doeth: They must then necessarily happen so. To which our Clarks and Maisters answere, that to see any thing come to passe, as we doe, and likewise God (for he being present in ful essence, rather seeth than foreseeth) is not to force the same to happen: yea we see, because things come to passe, but things happen not because we se. The hapning makes the science or knowledge, and not knowledge the happening. What we see come to passe, happeneth; but it might come to passe otherwise. And God in the eternall register of the causes of happenings, which he hath in his prescience, hath also those, which are caled casual; and the voluntary, which depend of the liberty, he hath given unto our free will, and knoweth we shall faile, because our will shall have beene to faile. I have seene divers encourage their troupes with this fatall necessitie: For, if our houre be tied unto a certaine point neither the musket-shottes of our enemies, nor our courage, nor our flight and cowardize, can either advance or recoyle the same.

This may well be said, but seeke you who shall effect it: And if it be so, that a strong and lively



## THE SECOND BOOKE

faith, doth likewise draw action after it: truly this faith (wherewith we so much fill our mouthes) is marvelous light in our times: except the contempt it hath of works, make her disdain their company. So it is, that to the same purpose, the Lord of *Joinville*, as credible a witnesse as any other, tells us of the Bedoins, a nation entermingled with the Saracine, with whom our King Saint *Lerces* had to deale in the holy land, who so confidently believed in their religion, the dayes of every one to be prefixed and numbred from all eternitie, by an inevitable preordinance, that they went al bare and naked to the warres, except a Turkish Glaive in their hand, and their body covered but with a white linnen-cloth: And for the bitterest curse, if they chanced to fall out one with another, they had ever in their mouth: *Cursed be thou, as he that armeth himselfe for feare of death.* Here is another maner of triall or a belief or faith then ours. In this rank may likewise be placed that which those two religious men of *Florence*, not long since gave unto their countrymen. Being in some controversie betweene themselves about certaine points of learning: they accorded to go both into the fire, in the presence of al the people, and in the open market place, each one for the verifying of his opinion: and all preparations were ready made, and execution to be performed, but that by an unexpected accident it was interrupted. A yong Turkish Lord, having atchieved a notable piece of service in armes, and with his own person, in ful view of the two battles between *Ammurath* and *Huniades* ready to be joyned together, being demanded by *Ammurath* his Prince, who (being so yong and unexperienced, for it was the first warre or service he had seene before) had replenished him with so generous and undanted vigor of courage, answered, that a Hare had beene

CHAPTER

XXIX

Of Vertue

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXIX

Of Vertue

his soveraigne maister and onely teacher of valour: and thus began his speech. *Being one day a hunting, I found a Hare sitting in her forme, and although I had a brace of excellent good gray-hounds with me in a slip or leash, I thought it good, because I would be sure of my game to use my bow; for she was a very faire marke. I beganne to shoote my arrowes at her, which I did to the number of fortie (for in my quiver were just so many) yet could I never hurt her, no not so much as start her: After all this, I let slip my gray hounds, who could doe no more then I had done: by which I learnt, that she had beene sheltred and defended by her destinie; and that no glaives nor arrowes never hit, but by the permission of our fatalitie, which it lieth not in us to avoide or advance.* This storie may serve to make us perceive by the way, how flexible our reason is to all sorts of objects. A notable man, great in yeares, in name, in dignity and in learning, vaunted himselfe unto me, that he was induced to a certaine most important change of his religion, by a strange and fantastical incitation: and in al things so il concluding that I deemed the same stronger and more forcible, being taken contrary. He termed it a miracle, and so did I, but in a different sense. Their historians say, that perswasion having popularly beene scattered amongst the Turkes, of the fatal and inflexible prescription of their dayes, doth apparantly aide to warrant and embolden them in dangers. And I know a great Prince, who happily thrives by it, be it he believe it, or take it for an excuse to hazard himselfe extraordinarily; provided fortune be not soone wearie to favour and backe him. There hath not happened in our memorie a more admirable effect of resolution, than of those two villaines that conspired the death of the Prince of *Orange*: It is strange how, the last, who performed the same, could be induced or

## THE SECOND BOOKE

encouraged to undergo such an enterprise, wherin his fellow (though he had resolutely attempted it, and had all might be required for such an action) had so ill successe, and miscarried. And in those steps, and with the same weapons, to go and undertake a Lord, armed with so late an instruction of distrust; mighty in friends and followers; puissant of bodily strength: in his owne hall: amidst his servants and garde; and in a City wholly at his devotion. It must of force be saide, that in performing it, he employed a well-directed and resolute hand, and a dreadlesse courage, mooved by a vigorous passion. A Poynard is more sure to wound a man, which forsomuch as it requireth more motion and vigor of the arme, than a pistol, it's stroke is more subject to be hindred or avoyded. That the first ranne not to an assured death, I make no great doubt, for the hopes wherwith he might be entertained could not harbour in a well settled and resolute minde; and the conduct of his exploit, sheweth, he wanted no more that, then courage. The motions of so forcible a perswasion may be divers; for, our fantasie disposeth of her self and of us as she pleaseth. The execution committed neere Orleans had no coherence with this, wherin was more hazard, then vigor; the blow was not mortall, had not fortune made it so: and the enterprise to shoote on horse-backe and far-off, and to one who mooved still according to the motion of his horse; was the attempt of a man that rather loved to misse of his effect, then faile to save himselfe. What followed did manifestly shew it. For, he was so amazed and drunken with the thought of so haughty an execution, as he lost all his senses, both to worke his escape, and direct his tongue in his answers. What needed he have done more, then recover his friends by crossing of a river? It is a meane, wherein I have cast my selfe in farre lesse dangers,

CHAPTER  
XXIX

Of Vertue



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXIX

#### Of Vertue

and which I thinke of small hazard, how broad soever, alwaies provided your horse find an easie entrance, and on the further side you foresee an easie and shallow landing, according to the course of the streame of the water. The second, when the horrible sentence was pronounced against him, answered stoutly, *I was prepared for it, and I shall amaze you with my patience.* The Assassines, a nation depending of Phœnicia, are esteemed among the Mahometists of a soveraigne devotion and puritie of maners; they hold, that the readiest and shortest way to gaine Paradise, is to kill some one of a contrary religion: therefore hath it often beene seene, that one or two in their bare doublets have undertaken to assault mighty enemies, with the price of an assur'd death, and without any care of their owne danger. And thus was our Earle *Raymond* of *Tripoli* murdered or assassinated (this word is borrowed from their name) in the middest of his Citie, during the time of our warres in the holy land: And likewise *Conrade* Marquis of *Montferrato* his murderers being brought to their torture; were seene to swel with pride, that they had performed so worthy an exploit.

### THE THIRTIETH CHAPTER

#### *Of a monstrous Child*



HIS discourse shall passe single, for I leave it to Physitions to treat of. I saw two dayes since a child, whom two men and a nurce (which named themselves to be his father, his Unckle, and his Aunt) carried about with intent to get some money with the sight of him, by reason of his strangenes. In all the rest, he

## THE SECOND BOOKE

was as other children are, he stood upon his feete, went and pratted in a maner as all others of his age: He would never take nourishment, but by his nourses breast; and what in my presence was offred to be put in his mouth, he chewed a little, and put it all out againe. His puling differed somewhat from others: He was just fourteene moneths olde. Under his paps he was fastned and joyned to an other child, but had no head, and who had the conduite of his backe stopped, the rest whole. One of his armes was shorter then the other, and was by accident broken at their birth. They were joyned face to face, and as if a little child would embrace another somewhat bigger. The joyning and space whereat they were closed together, was but foure inches broad, or thereabouts; in such sort that if you thrust up the imperfect child, you might see under the others navill. And the seame was betweene the paps and his navill. The navill of the imperfect one could not be scene, but all the rest of his belly might. Thus, what of the imperfect one was not joyned, as armes, buttockes, thighes and legges, did hang and shake upon the other, whose length reached to the middle-leg of the other perfect. His Nurce told me, he made water by both privities. The members of the little one were nourished, living, and in the same state as the others, except only, they were lesse and thinner. This double body, and these different members, having reference to one onely head, might serve for a favorable prognostication to our King, to maintaine the factions and differing parties of this our kingdome under an unitie of the lawes. But least the successe should prove it contrary, it is not amisse to let him runne his course: For in things already past their need no divination. *Ut quum facta sunt, tum ad conjecturam aliqua interpretatione revocantur* (Cic. *Divin.* ii.): *So as when they are done, they then*

CHAPTER

XXX

Of a monstrous Child

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER

#### XXX

### Of a monstrous Child

*by some construction should be revoked to conjecture :*

As it is reported of *Epimenides*, who ever divined backward. I come now from seeing of a shepheard at *Medoc*, of thirtie yeares of age, or thereabouts, who had no signe at all of genitorie parts : But where they should be, are three little holes, by which his water doth continually tril from him. This poore man hath a beard, and desireth still to be fumbling of women. *Those which we call monsters are not so with God, who in the immensitie of his worke seeth the infinitie of formes therein contained.* And it may be thought, that any figure [which] doth amaze us, hath relation unto some other figure of the same kinde, although unknown unto man. *From out his all seeing wisdom proceedeth nothing but good, common, regular and orderly ; but we neither see the sorting, nor conceive the relation.* *Quod crebrò videt, non miratur, etiam si, cur fiat, nescit. Quod antè non vidit, id, si evenerit, ostentum esse censet* (CIC. *Divin. ii.*). *That which he often seeth, he doth not wonder at, though he know not why it is done ; But if that happen, which he never saw before, he thinks it some portentuous wonder.* Wee call that against nature, which commeth against custome. There is nothing, whatsoever it be, that is not according to hir. Let therefore this universall and naturall reason, chase from us the error, and expell the astonishment, which noveltie breedeth, and strangenes causeth in us.



# THE SECOND BOOKE

## THE THIRTY-FIRST CHAPTER

*Of anger and choler*



LUTARKE is every where admirable, **CHAPTER XXXI**  
but especially where he judgeth of humane actions. The notable things he reporteth, may be perceived in the comparison of *Lycurgus* and *Numa*, speaking of the great simplicity we

*Of anger and choler*

commit, in leaving yong children under the government and charge of their fathers and parents. Most of our policies, or Common-wealths, saith *Aristotle* (as the Cyclopes were wont) commit the conduct of their wives, and charge of their children, to all men, according to their foolish humor or indiscrete fantasies. And wel-nigh, none but the Lacedemonian and Cretensian, have resigned the discipline of children to the lawes. *Who seeth not, that in an estate all things depend of nurture and education?* And all the while, without discretion, it is wholly left to the parents mercy, how foolish and wicked soever they be. Amongst other things, how often (walking through our streetes) have I desired to have a play or comedie made in revenge of young boyes, which I sawe thumpt, misused, and well nigh murdered by some haire-brained, moodie, and through choler-raging Fathers and Mothers, from out whose eyes a man might see sparkles of rage to startle.

*—rabie jecur incendente feruntur  
Præcipites, ut saxa jugis abrupta, quibus mons  
Subtrahitur, clivoque latus pendente recedit :*

*--Juv. Sat. vi. 548.*

They headlong runne with rage, which doth enflame their livers  
Like stones that broken fall from mountaine tops in shivers,  
The hill withdrawes, and they are rould  
From hanging cliffe which leaves their hold,

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

(And according to *Hypocrates*, the most dangerous infirmities, are those which disfigure the face) and with a loud thundring voice often to follow children that came but lately from nurce; Which after prove lame, maimed, blockish and dul-pated with blowes: And yet our lawes makes no accompt of it, as if these spraines, and unjoyntings of limbs, or these maimes were no members of our Common-wealth.

*Gratum est quod patriæ civem populoque dedisti,  
Si facis ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agris,  
Utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis.*

—Juv. Sat. xiv. 70.

That you to th' countrie give a man, 'tis acceptable,  
If for the countrie fit you make him, for fields able,  
Of peace and warre for all achievements profitable.

*There is no passion so much transports the sinceritie of judgement, as doth anger.* No man would make conscience to punish that Judge by death, who in rage or choler had condemned an offender. And why should fathers be allowed to beate, or schoole-masters be suffered to whip children, or to punish them being angry? It is no longer correction, but revenge. *Punishment is unto children as physicke*; and would any man endure a physicion, that were angrie and wroth against his patient? Our selves (did we well) during the time of our anger, should never lay hands on our servants. So long as our pulse panted, and we feele any concitation, so long remit we the partie: And things will seeme farre otherwise unto us, if we once come to our senses againe, and shall better bethinke us. Then is it passion that commandes. It is passion that speaketh and not we. Athwart it, faults seeme much greater unto us, as bodies doe athwart a foggy mist. Who so is hungry, useth meat, but who so will use chastisement, should never hunger nor thirst after it. Moreover, corrections

## THE SECOND BOOKE

given with discretion and moderation, are more gently received, and with more good to him that receiveth them. Otherwise hee shall never thinke to have beene justly condemned, by a man who is transported by rage and choler, and for his justification alleadgeth the extraordinary motions of his maister, the inflammation of his face, his unwonted oaths, his chafing, his unquietnesse and his rash precipitation.

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

*Ora lument ira, nigrescunt sanguine venæ :  
Lumina Gorgoneo ætius igne micant,*

—OVID. *Art. Am.* iii. 53.

The face with anger swelles, the veines grow blacke with blood,  
The eyes more fiercely shine then *Gorgons* fierie moode.

*Suetonius* writeth, that *Caius Rabirius*, having by *Cæsar* been condemned, nothing did him so much good toward the people (to whom he appealed) to make him obtain his suite, as the sharpnes and over boldnes which *Cæsar* had declared in that judgement. *Saying is one thing, and doing another. A man must consider the Sermon apart and the preacher severall.* Those have made themselves good sport, who in our dayes have gone about to checke the veritie of our Church, by the ministers vice : She fetcheth hir testimonie from elsewhere. It is a foolish manner of arguing, and which would soone reduce all things to a confusion. *An honest man may sometimes have false opinions, and a wicked man may preach truth : Yea such a one as beleeves it not.* Verely, it is a pleasing harmonic, when doing and saying goe together. And I will not deny, but saying, when deeds follow, is of more efficacie and authoritie : As said *Eudamidas*, when he heard a Philosopher discourse of warre : *These speeches are good, but he that speaks them, is not to be beleaved.* For his eares were never accustomed to heare the clang of trumpets, nor rattling of drums. And *Cleomenes* hearing a Rhetor-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

ritian speake of valour, burst out into an extreame laughter: Whereat the other being offended, he said unto him: *I would doe as much if it were a Swallow should speake of it, but were he an Eagle, I should gladly heare him.* Me seemeth I perceiue in ancient mens writings, that he who speaks what he thinketh, toucheth nearer the quick, then he who counterfaits. Heare *Cicero* speak of the love of libertie; then listen to *Brutus*; their very wordes will tell you and sound in your eare, the latter was a man readie to purchase it with the price of his life. Let *Cicero*, that father of eloquence treat of the contempt of death, and let *Seneca* discourse of the same; the first drawes it on languishing, and you shall plainly perceive, he would faine resolve you of a thing, whereof he is not yet resolved himselfe. He giveth you no heart, for himselfe hath none: Whereas the other doth rowze, animate and inflame you. I never looke upon an Author, be they such as write of vertue and of actions, but I curiously endeavor to finde out what he was himselfe. For, the *Ephori* of *Sparta*, hearing a dissolute liver propose a very beneficiall advise unto the people, commaunded him to hold his peace, and desired an honest man to assume the invention of it unto himselfe and to propound it. *Plutarke*s compositions, if they be well savored, doe plainly manifest the same unto us: And I am perswaded I know him inwardly: Yet would I be glad, we had some memories of his owne life: And by the way I am false into this discourse, by reason of the thanks I owe unto *Aulus Gellius*, in that he hath left us written this storie of his manners, which fitteth my subject of anger. A slave of his, who was a lewd and vicious man, but yet whose eares were somewhat fedde with Philosophicall documents, having for some faults by him committed, by the commandement of *Plutarke* his master, been stripped naked, whilst

## THE SECOND BOOKE

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

another servant of his whipped him, grombled in the beginning, that he was whipped without reason, and had done nothing: But in the end, mainly crying out, he fell to raling and wronging his master, upbraiding him that he was not a true Philosopher, as he vanted himself to be, and how he had often heard him say, that, *it was an unseemely thing in a man to be angry.* And that he had made a booke of it: And now all plunged in rage, and engulfed in choler to cause him so cruelly to be beaten, was cleane contrarie to his owne writing. To whom *Plutarke* with an unaltered, and milde-settled countenance, said thus unto him. What? Thou raskall, whereby doest thou judge I am now angrie? Doth my countenance, doth my voice, doth my coulour, or doth my speech give thee any testimony, that I am either moved or cholericke? Me seemeth, mine eyes are not staringly-wilde, nor my face troubled, nor my voice frightful or distempered: Doe I waxe red? Doe I foame at the mouth? Doth any word escape me I may repent hereafter? Doe I startle and quake? Doe I rage and ruffle with anger? For, to tel thee true, these are the right signes of choler and tokens of anger. Then turning to the party that whipped him; continue still thy worke, quoth he, whilst this fellow and I dispute of the matter. This is the report of *Gellius*. *Architas Tarentinus* returning from a war, where he had beene Captaine generall, found his house all out of order, husbandrie all spoiled, and by the ill government of his Bailife, his ground all waste and unmanured; and having called for him, said thus; *Away bad man, for if I were not angrie, I would have thee whipt for this.* *Plato* likewise, being vexed and angrie with one of his slaves, commaunded *Speusippus* to punish him, excusing himselfe, that now being angrie he would not lay hands upon him. *Charilus* the Lacedemonian, to

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER one *Helot* who behaved himself over insolently and  
 XXXI audaciously towards him; *By the Gods* (saith he) *If*  
 Of anger and *I were not now angry, I would presently make thee*  
 choler *die.* It is a passion which pleaseth and flattereth it  
 selfe. How many times being moved by any false  
 suggestion, if at that instant we be presented with  
 any lawful defence or true excuse, doe we fall into  
 rage against truth and innocencie it selfe? Touching  
 this purpose, I have retained a wonderfull example  
 of antiquitie. *Piso*, in divers other respects a man of  
 notable vertue, being angrie, and chafing with one of  
 his Souldiers, who returning from forage or boot-  
 haling, could not give him an accompt where he had  
 left a fellow-Souldier of his, and thereupon concluding  
 he had killed or made him away, forthwith con-  
 demned him to be hanged. And being upon the  
 gallowes ready to dye; behold his companion, who  
 had stragled abroad, comming home, whereat all the  
 army rejoyced very much, and after many embrac-  
 ings and signes of joy between the two souldiers, the  
 hangman brought both unto *Piso*; al the company  
 hoping, it wold be a great pleasure unto him; but it  
 fel out cleane contrary, for through shame and spite  
 his wrath still burning was redoubled, and with a sly  
 devise his passion instantly presented to his mind, he  
 made three guiltie, forsomuch as one of them was  
 found innocent; and caused them all three to bee  
 dispatched. The first Souldier because he was  
 already condemned; the second, which had stragled  
 abroad, by reason he was the cause of his fellowes  
 death; and the hangman, for that he had not ful-  
 filled his Generalls commaundement. Those who  
 have to deale with froward and skittish women  
 have no doubt seene what rage they wil fal into.  
 if when they are most angrie and chafing, a  
 man be silent and patient, and disdaine to foster  
 their anger and wrath. *Celius* the Orator was by



## THE SECOND BOOKE

nature exceeding fretfull and cholerike. To one who was with him at supper, a man of a milde and gentle conversation, and who because he would not move him, seemed to approve what ever he said, and yeeld to him in every thing; as unable to endure his peevishnes should so passe without some nourishment, burst out into a rage, and said unto him: *For the love of God deny me something, that we may be two.* So women are never angrie, but to the end a man should againe be angrie with them, therein imitating the lawes of Love. *Phocion* to a man who troubled his discourse with brawling and skolding at him, in most injurious manner, did nothing else but hold his peace, and give him what leasure he would to vent his choler; which done, without taking any notice of it, began his discourse againe where he had left it off. *There is no reply so sharpe as such silent contempt.* Of the most cholerike and testie man of *France* (which is ever an imperfection, but more excusable in a military man; for it must needes be granted, there are in that profession some men who cannot well avoyde it) I ever say, he is the patientest man I knowe to bridle his choler; it mooveth and transporteth him with such furie and violence.

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

— *magno veluti cum flamma sonore*  
*Firgea suggeritur costis undantis aheni,*  
*Exultantque arstu latices, furit intus aqua;*  
*Fumidus atque alte spumans exuberat amnis,*  
*Nec jam se capit undas, volat vapor ater ad auras,*  
— *VIRG. ÆN. VI. 462*

As when a fagot flame with hurring sounds  
Under the ribbes of boyling cauldron lies,  
The water swelles with heat beyond the bounds,  
Whence steeming streames raging and foming rise;  
Water out-runns it selfe, blacke vapors flye to skies.

that he must cruelly enforce himselfe to moderate the same. And for my part, I know noe passion I

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

were able to smother with such temper and abide with such resolution. I would not set wisdome at so high a rate. I respect not so much what he doth, as how much it costs him not to doe worse. Another boasted in my presence, of his behaviours order and mildnesse, which in truth is singular: I tolde him, that indeed it was much, namely in men of so eminent quality, as himselfe was, on whom all eyes are fixed, alwaies to shew himselfe in a good temper: but that the chiefeest point consisted in providing inwardly and for himselfe; and that in mine opinion, it was no discreet part inwardly to fret: which, to maintaine that marke and formall outward apparence, I feared hee did. *Choler is incorporated by concealing and smothering the same, as Diogenes said to Demosthenes, who fearing to be seene in a Taverne, withdrew himselfe into the same: The more thou recoylest back, the further thou goest into it. I would rather perswade a man, though somewhat out of season, to give his boy a wherret on the eare, then to dissemble this wise, sterne or severe countenance, to vex and fret his minde. And I would rather make shew of my passions, then smother them to my cost: which being vented and exprest, become more languishing and weake: Better it is to let its pointe worke outwardly, then bend it against our selves. Omnia vitia in aperto leviora sunt: et tunc perniciosissima, quum simulata sanitate subsidunt* (SEN. Epist. lvi.). *All vices are then lesse perillous when they lie open to bee seene, but then most pernicious, when they lurke under counterfeited soundnesse. I ever warne those of my houshold, who by their offices-authoritie may sometimes have occasion to be angry, first to husband their anger; then not employ it upon every slight cause; for that empeacheth the effect and worth of it. Rash and ordinary brawling is converted to a custome, and that's the reason each*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

man contemnes it: That which you employ against a servant for any theeving, is not perceived, because it is the same he hath sundry times seene you use against him, if he have not washt a glasse well or misplaced a stoole. Secondly, that they be not angry in vaine, but ever have regard their chiding come to his eares with whom they are offended: for, commonly some will brawle before he come in their presence, and chide a good while after he is gone,

CHAPTER  
XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

*Et secum petulans amentia certat.*—CLAUD. in *Eu.* i. 48.

Madnesse makes with it selfe a fray,  
Which fondly doth the wanton play.

and wreake their anger against his shadow, and make the storme fall where no man is either chastised or interested, but with the rumour of their voice, and sometimes with such as cannot doe withall. I likewise blame those who being angry, will brave and mutinie when the partie with whom they are offended is not by. These *Rodomantudos* must be employed on such as feare them.

*Mugitus veluti cum prima in prælia taurus  
Terrificos ciet, atque irasci in cornua tentat,  
Arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacerat  
Ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit arena.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* xii. 103.

As when a furious Bull to his first combate mooves  
His terror-breeding lowes, his horne to anger proves,  
Striving against a trees trunke, and the winde with strokes,  
His preface made to fight with scattered sand, provokes.

When I chance to be angry, it is in the earnestest manner that may be, but yet as briefly and as secretly, as is possible. I lose my selfe in hastinesse and violence, but not in trouble: So that, let me spend all



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

manner of injurious words at randome and without all heed, and never respect to place my points pertinently, and where they may doe most hurt: For commonly I employ nothing but my tongue. My boyes scape better cheape in great matters, then in smal trifles. Slight occasions surprise me, and the mischiefe is, that after you are once falne into the pit, it is no matter who thrusts you in, you never cease til you come to the bottome. The fall presseth, hasteneth, mooveth and furthereth it selfe. In great occasions I am pleased, that they are so just, that every body [expects] a reasonable anger to insue. I glorify my selfe to deceive their expectation. Against these I bandy and prepare my selfe; they make me summon up my wits, and threaten to carry me very farre, if I would follow them. I easily keepe my selfe from falling into them, and if I stay for them, I am strong enough to reject the impulsion of this passion, what violent cause soever it hath. But if it seize upon and once preoccupate me, what vaine cause soever it hath, it doth cleane transport me: I condition thus with those that may contest with me, when you perceiue me to be first angry, be it right or wrong, let me hold-on my course, I will do the like to you, when ever it shal come to my lot. The rage is not engendred but by the concurrencie of cholers, which are easily produced one of another, and are not borne at one instant. Let us allow every man his course, so shal we ever be in peace. Oh profitable prescription, but of an hard execution! I shal some time seeme to be angry for the order and direction of my house, without any just emotion; According as my age yeeldeth my humours more sharpe and peevish, so do I endeavour to oppose my selfe against them, and if I can I will hereafter enforce my selfe to be lesse froward and not so teasty, as I shall have more excuse and inclination to bee so; although I

## THE SECOND BOOKE

have heretofore beene in their number that are least. A word more to conclude this Chapter: *Aristotle* saith, "*Choler doth sometimes serue as armes unto Vertue and Valour.*" It is very likely: notwithstanding such as gainesay him, answer pleasantly, it is a weapon of a new fashion and strange use: For we mooue other weapons, but this mooveth us: our hand doth not guide it, but it directeth our hand: it holdeth us, and we hold not it.

CHAPTER

XXXI

Of anger and  
choler

### THE THIRTY-SECOND CHAPTER

*A Defence of Seneca and Plutarke*



THE familiarity I have with these two men, and the ayd they affoord me in my olde age, and my Booke meerey framed of their spoiles, bindeth me to wed and maintaine their honour. As for *Seneca*, amongst a thousand petty-Pamphlets, those of the pretended reformed religion have published, for the defence of their cause, which now and then proccede from a good hand, and which, pittie it is, it should not be employed in more serious and better subjects: I have heretofore scene one, who to prolong and fil up the similitude, he would finde betweene the government of our unfortunate late King *Charles* the ninth and that of *Nero*, compareth the whilom Lord Cardinall of *Lorene* unto *Seneca*: their fortunes to have beene both chiefe men in the government of their Princes, and therewithall their manners, their conditions and their demeanours: wherein (in mine opinion) he doth the said Lord Cardinal great honour: for, although I be one of those that highly respect his spirit, his worth, his eloquence, his zeale toward his religion and the service of his King: and his good fortune to have beene borne in an age, wherein

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

hee was so new, so rare, and therewithall so necessary for the common-wealth, to have a Clergie-man of such dignitie and nobility, sufficient and capable of so weighty a charge: yet to confesse the truth, I esteeme not his capacitie such, nor his vertue so exquisitely unspotted, nor so entire or constant, as that of *Seneca*. Now this Booke whereof I speake, to come to his intention, maketh a most injurious description of *Seneca*, having borrowed his reproaches from *Dion* the historian, to whose testimony I give no credit at all: For besides, he is inconstant, as one who after he hath called *Seneca* exceeding wise, and shortly after termed him a mortal enemy to *Neroes* vices, in other places makes him covetous, given to usurie, ambitious, base-minded, voluptuous, and under false pretences, and fained shewes, a counterfet Philosopher; his vertue appeareth so lively, and wisdom so vigorous in his writings; and the defence of these imputations is so manifest, as wel of his riches, as of his excessive expences, that I beleeve no witnesse to the contrary. Moreover, there is great reason we should rather give credit to Romane Historians in such things, then to Græcians and strangers, whereas *Tacitus* and others speake very honourably of his life and death, and in all other circumstance declare him to have beene a most excellent and rarely vertuous man. I wil alleadge no other reproach against *Dion* judgement, then this, which is unavoydable: that is. his understanding of the Roman affaires, is so weake and il advised, as he dareth defend and maintaine *Julius Cæsars* cause against *Pompey*, and blusheth not to justifie *Antonius* against *Cicero*. But let us come to *Plutarke*; *John Bodine* is a good moderne Author, and endowed with much more judgement then the common-rabble of Scriblers and blur-papers which now adayes stufte Stationers shops, and who deserveth to be judged, considered and had in more



## THE SECOND BOOKE

then ordinary esteeme. Neverthelesse I finde him somewhat malapert and bolde in that passage of his *Methode of Historie*, when he accuseth *Plutarke*, not only of ignorance (wherein I would have let him say his pleasure, for that is not within my element) but also that he often writeth things, altogether incredible and meerely fabulous (these are his very words). If he had simply said things otherwise then they are, it had been no great reprehension: for, what we have not seene, we receive from others and upon trust: And I see him sometime, wittingly and in good earnest report one and same story diversly: As, the judgements of three best captaines that ever were, spoken by *Hanibal*, is otherwise in *Flaminius* his life, and otherwise in *Pyrrhus*. But to taxe him, to have taken incredible, and impossible things for ready payment, is to accuse the [most] judicious author of the World, of want of judgement. And see heere his example: As (saith he) when he reports that a Childe of *Lacedemon* suffered all his belly and gutts to be torne out by a Cubbe or young Foxe, which he had stolne, and kept close under his garment, rather then he would discover his theft. First, I finde this example ill chosen; Forasmuch as it is very hard to limit the powers of the soules-faculties, whereas of corporal forces, we have more law to limite and know them: And therefore, had I been to write of such a subject, I would rather have made choyce of an example of this second kind. And some there be lesse credible. As amongst others, that which he reports of *Pyrrhus*, who being sore wounded, gave so great a blow with a sword unto one of his enemies, arm'd at al assayes, and with all pieces, as he cleft him from the crowne of the head down to the groine, so that the body fell in two pieces. In which example I finde no great wonder, nor do I admit of his excuse, wherewith

CHAPTER  
XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

he cloaketh *Plutarke*: to have added this word (as it is said) to forewarne us, and restraîne our beliefe. For, if it be not in things received, by authoritie and reverence of antiquity or religion, neither would himselfe have received, nor proposed to us to believe things in themselves incredible; And that (as it is said) hee doth not here sette downe this phrase to that purpose, may easily be perceived, by what himselfe in other places telleth us upon the subject of the Lacedemonian Childrens patience, of examples happened in his time, much harder to be perswaded: As that which *Cicero* hath also witnessed before him, because, (as he saith) he had been there himselfe: That even in their times there were Children found prepared to endure al maner of patience, whereof they made trial before *Dianaes* Altar, and which suffered themselves to bee whipped, till the blood trilled downe al parts of their body, not onely without crying, but also without sobbing: and some who voluntarily suffered themselves to be scourged to death. And what *Plutarke* also reporteth, and a hundreth other witnesses averre, that assisting at a sacrifice, a burning coale happened to fall into the sleeve of a Lacedemonian childe, as he was busie at incensing, suffered his arme to burne so long, untill the smel of his burnt flesh came to al the by-standers. There was nothing according to their custome, so much called their reputation in question, and for which they endured more blame and shame, than to be surprised stealing. I am so well instructed of those mens greatnes of courage, that this report, doth not only not seeme incredible to me, as to *Bodine*, but I do not so much as deeme it rare, or suppose it strange: The Spartane story is full of thousands of much more rare and cruell examples; then according to this rate, it containeth nothing but miracle. Concerning this point of stealing,

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Marcellinus* reporteth, that whilst hee lived, there could never be found any kinde of torment that might in any sort compell the Egyptians surprized filching (which was much used amongst them) to confesse and tell but their names. A Spanish Peasant being laide upon the racke, about the complices of the murther of the Pretor *Lucius Piso*, in the midst of his torments cried out, his friends should not stir, but with al security assist him, and that it was not in the power of any grieve or paine to wrest one word of confession from him: and the first day nothing else could possibly be drawn from him. The next morrow as he was led toward the rack, to be tormented a new, he by strong violence freed himselfe from out his keepers hands, and so furiously ranne with his head against a wall, that he burst his braines out, and presently fel down dead. *Epicharis*, having glutted and wearied the moody cruelty of *Nero's* Satellites or officers, and stoutly endured their fire, their beatings, and their engins a whole day long, without any one voyce, or word of revealing hir conspiracy, and the next day after, being againe brought to the torture, with hir limbs bruized and broken, convayed the lace or string of hir gowne over one of the pillars of the Chaire wherein she sate, with a sliding knot in it into which sodainly thrusting her head, she strangled her selfe with the weight of hir body: Having the courage to dye so, and steale from the first torments: seemeth she not purposely to have lent her life to the trial of hir patience of the precedent day, only to mocke that Tyrant, and encourage others to attempt the like enterprize against him? And he that shall enquire of our *Argolettiers* or *Free-booters*, what experiences they have had in these our late civil wars, shal no doubt find effects and examples of patience, of obstinacy and stif-neckednes in these

CHAPTER  
XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

our miserable dayes, and amidst the effeminate, and puling worldlings far beyond the Egyptian, and well worthie to be compared to those alreadie reported of Spartan vertue. I know, there have been found seely boores, who have rather endure to have their feet broiled upon a Greedyron, their fingers ends crusht and wrung with the lock of a Pistoll, their eyes all bloody to be thrust out of their heads with wringing and wresting of a cord about their foreheads, before they would so much as be ransomed. I have seene and spoken with one who had beene left al naked in a ditch for dead, his necke al bruised and swolne, with a halter about it, wherewith he had beene dragged a whole night at a horses taile through thick and thin, with a 100. thrusts in his body, given him with daggers, not to kill him outright, but to grieve and terrifie him, and who had patiently endured all that, and lost both speech and sense, fully resolved (as himselfe told me) rather to die a thousand deaths (as verily, if you apprehend what he suffered, he past more then one full death) then promise any ransome; yet was he one of the wealthiest husbandmen in al his country. How many have bin seene, who have patiently endured to be burnt and rosted for unknown and wilful opinions, which they had borrowed of others: My selfe have knowne a hundred and a hundred women (for, the saying is, Gaskoine heads have some prerogative in that) whom you might sooner have made to bite a red-hot piece of iron, then recant an opinion, they had conceived in anger. They will be exasperated and grow more fell against blowes and compulsion. And he who first invented the tale of that woman, which by no threats or stripes, would leave to call her husband pricke-lowse, and being cast into a pond and duckt under water, lifted up her hands, and joyning her two thumbs-

## THE SECOND BOOKE

nailes in act to kill lice above her head, seemed to call him lousie stil, devised a fable, whereof in truth we dayly see the expres image in divers womens obstinacie and wilfulnesse. And yet *obstinacy is the sister of constancy* at least in vigor and steadfastnesse.

CHAPTER  
XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

A man must not judge that which is possible, and that which is not, according to that which is credible and incredible to our sense and understanding, as I have already said elsewhere. And it is a great fault, wherein the greater number of men doe dayly fall (I speake not this of *Bodine*) to make a difficulty in believing that of others, which themselves neither can nor would doe. Every man perswades himselfe, that the chiefe forme of humane nature is in himselfe; according to her, must all others be directed. The proceedings that have no reference to hers, are false and fained. Is any thing proposed unto him of another mans faculties or actions? The first thing he calls to the judgement of his consultation, is his owne examples; according as it goeth in him, so goeth the worlds order. Oh dangerous sottishnesse, and intolerable foppery! I consider some men a farre-off, beyond and above my selfe, namely amongst those ancient ones: and though I manifestly acknowledge mine owne insufficiencie to follow or come neere them by a thousand paces, I cease not to keepe them still in view, and to judge of those wardes and springs that raise them so high; the seedes whereof I somewhat perceive in my selfe: as likewise I doe of the mindes extreame basenes which amazeth me nothing at all, and I misbelieve no more. I see the turne those give to wind up themselves, and I admire their greatnessse, and those starts which I perceive to be so wondrous faire, I embrace them: and if with my strength I reach not unto them, at least my judgement doth most willingly apply it selfe unto them.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

The other example he alledgeth of things incredible, and altogether fabulous, reported by *Plutarke*, is, that *Agesilaus* was fined by the Ephories, because he had drawne the hearts and good wills of al his fellow-cittizens unto himselfe alone. I know not what marke of falsehood, or shew of impossibilitie he findes in it; but so it is, that *Plutarke* speaks there of things which in al likelyhood were better knowne to him, then to us: And as it was not strange in *Greece*, to see men punished and exiled, onely because they were too popular, and pleased the common people over much. Witnesse the *Ostracisme* amongst the Athenians, and the *Petalisme* among the Siracusans. There is another accusation in the same place, which for *Plutarke's* sake doth somewhat touch me, where he saith, that he hath very well and in good truth sorted the Romanes with the Romanes, and the Græcians amongst themselves, but not the Romanes with the Græcians, witnesse (saith he) *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, *Cato* and *Aristides*, *Sylla* and *Lysander*, *Marcellus* and *Pelopidas*; *Pompey* and *Agesilaus*, deeming thereby that he hath favoured the Græcians, in giving them so unequal companions. It is a just reproving of that, which is most excellent and commendable in *Plutarke*: For, in his comparisons (which is the most admirable part of his worke, and wherein in mine opinion he so much pleased himselfe) the faithfulness and sinceritie of his judgement equalleth their depth and weight. He is a Philosopher that teacheth us vertue. But let us see, whether we can warrant him from this reproch of prevarication and falsehood. That which I imagine hath given occasion or ground to this judgement is, that great and farre-spreading lustre of the *Romane* names, which still are tingling in our eares, and never out of our mindes. Wee doe not thinke *Demosthenes* may equall the glory of a Consul, of a Proconsul and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

a Questor of this great common wealth of *Rome*. But he that shall impartially consider the truth of the matter, and men in themselves, which *Plutarke* did chiefly aime at, and more to balance their custome, their naturall dispositions and their sufficiencie, then their fortune: I am of a cleane opposite opinion to *Bodine*, and thinke that *Cicero* and old *Cato* are much behind or short of their parallels. For this purpose, I would rather have chosen the example of yong *Cato* compared to *Phocian*: for in that paire might well be found a more likely disparitie for the Romanes advantage. As for *Marcellus*, *Sylla* and *Pompey*, I see very well, how their exploits of warre, be more swolne, glorious and pompous, then the Græcians, whom *Plutarke* compareth unto them; but the most vertuous, and fairest actions, no more in warre, then elsewhere, are not alwaies the most famous. I often see the names of some Captaines smothered under the brightnesse of other names of lesser desert, witnesse *Labienu*, *Ventidius*, *Telexinus* and divers others. And to take him in that sense, were I to complaine for the Græcians, might not I say, that *Camillus* is much lesse comparable unto *Themistocles*, the *Gracchi* to *Agis* and *Cleomenes*, and *Numa* to *Lycurgus*? But it is follie at one glance to judge of things with so many and divers faces. When *Plutarke* compares them, he doth not for all that equall them. Who could more eloquently, and with more conscience note their differences? Doth he compare the victories, the exploits of armes, the power of the armies conducted by *Pompey* and his triumphs unto those of *Agexilaus*? I do not believe (saith he) that *Xenophon* himself (were he living) though it were granted him to write his pleasure for the advantage of *Agexilaus*, durst ever dare to admit any comparison betweene them: Seemeth he to equall *Lysander* to *Sylla*? There is

CHAPTER  
XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXII

A defence of  
Seneca and  
Plutarke

no comparison (saith he) neither in number of victories, nor in hazard of battels betweene them: for, *Lysander* onely obtained two sea-battels etc. This is no derogation from the Romanes. If hee have but simply presented them unto the Gracians, what ever disparity may bee betweene them, he hath not in any sort wronged them. And *Plutarke* doth not directly counterpoise them. In some there is none preferred before others; He compareth the parts and the circumstances one after another, and severally judgeth of them. If therefore any would goe about to convince him of favour, he should narrowly sift out some particular judgement; or in general and plaine termes say, hee hath missed in sorting such a *Græcian* to such a *Romane*, forasmuch as there are other more sortable and correspondent, and might better be compared, as having more reference one unto another.

### THE THIRTY-THIRD CHAPTER

*The Historie of Spuria*



PHILOSOPHY thinketh, she hath not il employed hir meanes, having yeelded the sovereign rule of our mind, and the authoritie to restraine our appetites, unto reason. Amongst which, those who judge there is none more violent, than those which love begetteth, have this for their opinion, that they holde both of body and soule; and man is wholly possessed with them: so that health it selfe depended of them, and physick is sometimes constrained to serve them in stead of a Pander-ship. But contrariwise, a man might also say, that the commixture of the body doth bring abatement



## THE SECOND BOOKE

and weaknesse unto them; because such desires are subject to satiety and capable of materiall remedies. Many who have endeavored to free and exempt their mindes from the continuall alarumes, which this appetite did assail them with, have used incisions, yea and cut-off the mooving, turbulent and unruly parts. Others have alayed the force and fervency of them by frequent applications of cold things, as snow and vinegar. The haire-cloths which our forefathers used to weare for this purpose, wherof some made shirts, and some wastebands or girdles, to torment their reines. A Prince told me not long since, that being very yong, and waiting in the Court of King *Francis* the first, upon a solemne feastival day, when all the Court endeavored to be in their best clothes, a humor possessed him to put-on a shirt of haire-cloth, which he yet keepeth, and had beene his fathers; but what devotion soever possessed him, he could not possibly endure untill night to put it off againe, and was sick a long time after, protesting he thought no youthly heat could be so violent, but the use of this receipt would coole and alay; of which he perhaps never assayed the strongest: For, experience sheweth us, that such emotion doth often maintaine it selfe under base, rude and slovenly cloathes; and haire cloathes doe not ever make those poore that weare them. *Zenocrates* proceeded more rigorously; for, his Disciples to make triall of his continencie, having conveyed that beauteous and famous curtizan *Lais* naked into his bed, saving the weapons of her beauty, wanton alurements, and amorous or love-procuring potions, feeling that maugre all Philosophicall discourses, and strict rules, his skittish body beganne to mutinie, he caused those members to be burned, which had listened to that rebellion. Whereas the passions that are in the minde, as ambition, covetousnesse and others, trouble reason much more: for, it

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of *Spurina*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER can have no ayde but from it's owne meanes; nor  
 XXXIII are those appetites capable of satiety, but rather  
 The Historie sharpened by enjoying, and augmented by possession.  
 of Spuria The example alone of *Julius Cæsar* may suffice to  
 shew us the disparitie of these appetites, for never  
 was man more given to amorous delights. The  
 curious and exact care he had of his body, is an  
 authentick witness of it, forsomuch as he used the  
 most lascivious meanes that then were in use: as,  
 to have the haire of his body smeared and perfumed  
 all over, with an extreame and labored curiositie:  
 being of himselfe a goodly personage, white, of a  
 tall and comely stature, of a cheerefull and seemely  
 countenance, his face full and round, and his eyes  
 browne lively, if at least *Suetonius* may be believed:  
 For, the statues which nowadaies are to be seene of  
 him in *Rome*, answer not altogether this portraiture  
 we speake of. Besides his wives, which he changed  
 foure times, without reckoning the bies, or Amours  
 in his youth with *Nicomedes King of Bythinia*, he  
 had the Maiden-head of that so farre, and highly-  
 renowned Queene of *Egypt Cleopatra*; witness  
 yong *Cæsarion* whom he begotte of hir. He also  
 made love unto *Eunoe* Queene of *Mauritania*, and at  
*Rome* to *Posthumia*, wife unto *Servius Sulpitius*: to  
*Lolia* wife to *Gabinus*; to *Tertulla*, of *Crassus*; yea  
 unto *Mutia* wife to great *Pompey*, which as historians  
 say, was the cause hir Husband was divorced from  
 her. Which thing *Plutarke* confesseth not to have  
 knowne. And the *Curions* both father and sonne  
 twitted *Pompey* in the teeth, at what time he took  
*Cæsars* Daughter to wife, that he made himselfe  
 Sonne in law to one, who had made him Cuckold.  
 and himself was wont to call *Egyptus*. Besides all  
 this number, he entertained *Servilia* the sister of  
*Cato*, and mother to *Marcus Brutus*: whence (as  
 divers hold) proceeded that great affection, he ever bare

## THE SECOND BOOKE

to *Marcus Brutus*: for his mother bare him at such a time as it was not unlikely he might be borne of him. Thus, (as me seemeth) have I good reason to deeme him a man extreamly addicted to all amorous licentiousnesse, and of a wanton-lascivious complexion. But the other passion of ambition, wherewith he was infinitely infected, and much tainted, when he came once to withstand the same, it made him presently to give ground. And touching this point, when I call *Mahomet* to remembrance (I meane him that subdued *Constantinople*, and who brought the final extermination of the name of Græcians) I know not where these two passions are more equal balanced: equally an indefatigable letcher, and a never-tired souldier: but when in his life they seeme to strive and concur one with another, the mutinous heate, doth ever gourmandize the amorous flame. And the latter, although out of naturall season did never attain to a full and absolutely authority, but when he perceived himself to be so aged that he was utterly unable longer to undergoe the burthen of War. That which is aleadged, as an example on the contrary side of *Ladislaus* King of *Naples*, is very well worth the noting, who though he were an excellent, couragious and ambitious Captaine, proposed unto himselfe, as the principall scope of his ambition, the execution of his sensuality, and enjoying of some rare and unmatched beauty. So was his death: Having by a continuall tedious siege brought the City of *Florence* to so narrow a pinch, that the inhabitants were ready to yeeld him the victory, he yeelded the same to them, upon condition they would deliver into his hands a wench of excellent beauty that was in the city, of whom he had heard great commendations; which they were enforced to graunt him, and so by a private injury to warrant the publike ruine of the City. She was

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of *Spurina*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

to *Marcus Brutus*: for his mother bare him at such a time as it was not unlikely he might be borne of him. Thus, (as me seemeth) have I good reason to deeme him a man extreemly addicted to all amorous licentiousnesse, and of a wanton-lascivious complexion. But the other passion of ambition, wherewith he was infinitely infected, and much tainted, when he came once to withstand the same, it made him presently to give ground. And touching this point, when I call *Mahomet* to remembrance (I meane him that subdued *Constantinople*, and who brought the final extermination of the name of Græcians) I know not where these two passions are more equal balanced: equally an indefatigable lecher, and a never-tired souldier: but when in his life they seeme to strive and concurre one with another, the mutinous heate, doth ever gourmandize the amorous flame. And the latter, although out of naturall season did never attain to a full and absolutely authority, but when he perceived himself to be so aged that he was utterly unable longer to undergoe the burthen of War. That which is alledged, as an example on the contrary side of *Ladislaus* King of *Naples*, is very wel worth the noting, who though he were an excellent, couragious and ambitious Captaine, proposed unto himselfe, as the principall scope of his ambition, the execution of his sensuality, and enjoying of some rare and unmatched beauty. So was his death: Having by a continuall tedious siege brought the City of *Florence* to so narrow a pinch, that the inhabitants were ready to yeeld him the victory, he yeelded the same to them, upon condition they would deliver into his hands a wench of excellent beauty that was in the city, of whom he had heard great commendations; which they were enforced to graunt him, and so by a private injury to warrant the publike ruine of the City. She was

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of *Sperina*



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of Spuria

the Daughter of a notable rare Phisician and whilst he lived chiefe of his profession : Who seeing himselfe engaged in so stuprous a necessitie, resolved upon an haughty enterprize ; Whilst all were busie adorning his daughter, and besetting her with costly jewels, that she might the more delight and please this new Kingly lover, he also gave her an exquisitely-wrought, and sweetly-perfumed handkercher, to use in their first approches and embracements, a thing commonly in use amongst the Women of that Country. This Handkercher strongly empoysoned according to the cunning skill of his Art, comming to wipe both their enflamed secret parts and open pores, did so readily convay and disperse it's poyson, that having sodainly changed the heate into colde, they immediately deceased one in anothers armes. But I will now returne to *Cæsar*. His pleasures could never make him lose one minute of an houre, nor turne one step from the occasions, that might any way further his advancement. This passion did so sovereignly oversway all others, and possessed his mind with so uncontrouled an authority, that shee carryed him whither she list. Truly I am grieved, when in other things I consider this mans greatnesse, and the wondrous parts that were in him ; so great sufficiencie in all maner of knowledge and learning, as there is almost no science wherein he hath not written. Hee was so good an Orator, that diverse have preferred his eloquence before *Ciceroes*: And himselfe (in mine opinion) in that facultie thought himselfe nothing short of him. And his two *Anti-Catoes*, were especially written to over-ballance the eloquence which *Cicero* had employed in his *Cato*. And for all other matters; was ever minde so vigilant, so active, and so patient of labour as his ? And doubtlesse, it was also embellished with sundry rare seedes of vertue. I meane

## THE SECOND BOOKE

lively, naturall and not counterfeits. He was exceeding sober, and so homely in his feeding, that *Oppius* reporteth: how upon a time, through a certaine Cookes negligence, his meat being dressed with a kind of medicinable Oyle, in stead of Olive-oyle, and so brought to the boorde, although he found it, yet he fed hartily of it, only because he would not shame his Hoste: Another time he caused his Baker to be whipped, because he had served him with other, than common houshold bread. *Cato* himselfe was wont to say of him, that he *was the first sober man, had addrest himselfe to the ruine of his country.* And whereas the same *Cato* called him one day drunkard, it hapned in this maner. Being both together in the Senate house, where *Catelines* conspiracie was much spoken of, wherein *Cæsar* was greatly suspected to have a hand; a note was by a friend of his brought, and in very secret sort delivered him, which *Cato* perceiving, supposing it might be something, that the Conspirators advertized him of, instantly summoned him to shew it, which *Cæsar* to avoid a greater suspicion, refused not: It was by chance an amorous letter, which *Servilia Catoes* sister writ to him: *Cato* having read it, threw it at him, saying, hold it againe thou drunkard. I say, it was rather a word of disdaine and anger, than an expresse reproch of this vice; as often we nick-name those that anger us, with the first nick-names of reproaches, that come into our mouth, though meerely impertinent to those with whom we fall out. Considering, that the vice wherewith *Cato* charged him, hath neare coherencie unto that, wherein he had surprised *Cæsar*: for *Venus* and *Bacchus* (as the vulgar Proverbe saith) agree well together; but with me *Venus* is much more blith and gamesome, being accompanied with sobrietic.

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of Sparina

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXIII

The Historie  
of Spurina

The examples of his mildenes and clemencie, toward such as had offended him, are infinite: I meane, besides those he shewed during the civill warres, which (as by his own writings may plainly appeare) he used to blandish and allure his enemies, to make them feare his future domination and victories the lesse. But if any shall say, those examples are not of validitie to witnes his genuine and natural affabilitie, we may lawfully answeere, that at least they shew us a wonderfull confidence, and greatnes of courage to have been in him. It hath often befalne him, to send whole armies backe again to his enemies, after he had vanquished them, without dayning to binde them so much, as with an oath, if not to favour, at least not to beare armes against him. He hath three or foure times taken some of *Pompeyes* chief Captaines prisoners, and as often set them at libertie againe. *Pompey* declared all such as would not follow and accompany him in his wars, to be his enemies; and he caused those to be proclaimed as friends, who either would not stirre at all, or not effectually arme themselves against him. To such of his Captaines as fled from him, to procure other conditions he sent them their weapons, their horses and all other furniture. The Citties he had taken, by maine force, he freed to follow what faction they would, giving them no other garison, then the memorie of his clemencie and mildnes. In the day of his great battail of *Pharsalia*, he expresly inhibited, that unles they were driven to unavoydable extremitie, no man should lay hands upon any Romane cittizen. In my judgement these are very hazardous partes, and it is no wonder, if in the civill warres tumultuous broiles, we have now on foote, those that fight for the ancient lawes and state of their country, as he did, doe not follow and imitate the example. They are extraordinary meanes, and



## THE SECOND BOOKE

which onely belongs to *Cæsars* fortune, and to his admirable fore-sight, succesfully to direct, and happily to conduct them. When I consider the incomparable greatnesse and unvaluable worth of his minde, I excuse *Victorie*, in that shee could not well give him over, in this most unjust and unnatural cause. But to returne to his clemencie; we have diverse genuine and lively examples, even in the time of his al-swaying government, when all things were reduced into his hands, and hee needed no longer to dissemble. *Caius Memmius*, had written certaine detracting and railing orations against him, which he at full and most sharpely had answered, neverthesse hee shortly after helped to make him Consul. *Caius Calvus*, who had composed diverse most injurious Epigrams against him, having employed sundrie of his friendes to bee reconciled to him againe, *Cæsar* descended to write first unto him. And our good *Catullus*, who under the name of *Mamurra* had so rudely and bitterly railed against him, at last comming to excuse himselfe, *Cæsar* that very night made him to suppe at his owne table. Having beene advertised how some were overlavish in rayling against him, all he did was but in a publike oration to declare how he was advertised of it. His enemies, he feared lesse then he hated them. Certaine conspiracies and conventicles were made against his life, which being discovered unto him, he was contented by an edict to publish, how he was throughly enformed of them, and never prosecuted the Authors. Touching the respect he ever bare unto his friendes; *Caius Oppius* travelling with him, and falling very sick, having but one chamber, he resigned the same unto him, and himselfe was contented to lie all night abroade and upon the bare ground. Concerning his justice, he caused a servant of his whom he exceedingly loved, to be executed,

CHAPTER  
XXXIII  
The Historie  
of *Spurina*

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of Spurina

forsomuch as he had laine with the wife of a Roman Knight, although no man sued or complained of him. Never was man, that shewed more moderation in his victorie, or more resolution in his adverse fortune. But all these noble inclinations, rich gifts, worthy qualities, were altered, smothered and eclipsed by this furious passion of ambition; by which he suffered himselfe to be so farre mis-led, that it may be well affirmed, she onely ruled the Sterne of all his actions. Of a liberall man, she made him a common theefe, that so he might the better supply his profusion and prodigalitie; and made him utter that vile and most injurious speech; that if the wickedst and most pernicious men of the world, had for his service and furtherance beene faithfull unto him, he would to the utmost of his power have cherished and preferred them, as well as if they had beene the honestest: It so besotted, and as it were made him drunke with so extreame vanitie, that in the presence of all his fellow-cittizens he durst vaunt himselfe, to have made that great and farre-spread Romane Commonwealth, a shapelesse and bodillesse name; and pronounce, that his Sentences or Answeres should thence forward serve as Lawes: And sitting, to receive the whole bodie of the Senate comming toward him: and suffer himselfe to be adored: and in his presence divine honours to be done him. To conclude, this only vice (in mine opinion) lost, and overthrew in him the fairest naturall and richest ingenuitie that ever was; and hath made his memorie abhominable to all honest mindes, insomuch as by the ruine of his countrey, and subversion of the mightiest state and most flourishing Commonwealth, that ever the world shall see, he went about to procure his glorie. A man might contrariwise finde diverse examples of greate persons, whom pleasure hath made to forget the conduct of their owne



## THE SECOND BOOKE

affaires, as *Marcus Antonius*, and others: but where love and ambition should be in one equall balance and with like forces mate one another, I will never doubt but *Cæsar* would guine the prize and gole of the victorie. But to come into my path againe. It is much, by discourse of reason, to bridle our appetites, or by violence to force our members to containe themselves within the bonds of dutie. But to whippe us for the interest of our neighbours, not only to shake off this sweete pleasing passion, which tickleth us with selfe-joying pleasure, we apprehend and feele to see our selves gratefull to others, and of all men beloved and sued unto: but also to hate and scorne those graces, which of it are the cause; and to condemne our beauty, because some others will be set on fire with it, I have seene few examples like to this. *Spurina* a yong Gentleman of *Thuscanie*,

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of *Spurina*

*Qualis gemma micat [fulvum] quæ dividit aurum,  
Aut collo decus aut capiti, vel quale per artem,  
Inclurum huro aut Erwia terebintha,  
Lucet ebur.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* x. 134.

As when a precious stone cleare rayes doth spread,  
Set in pure golde, adorning necke or head:  
Or as faire Iv'ry shines in boxe enclos'd,  
Or workemanly with Mountaine gumme dispos'd.

being endowed with so alluringly-excessive and singular beautie, that the chastest eyes could not possibly gainstand or continently resist the sparkling glances thereof, not contented to leave so great a flame succourlesse, or burning fever remedillesse, which he in all persons, and every where enkindled, entred into so furious despite against himselfe, and those rich gifts, nature had so prodigally conferred upon him (as if they must beare the blame of others faults) that with gashes, and skars, he wittingly mangled, and voluntarily cut that perfect propor-



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of Spuria

tion and absolute feature, which nature had so curiously observed in his unmatched face; whereof to speake my opinion, such outrages are enemies to my rules. I rather admire, then honour such actions. His intent was commendable, and his purpose consciencious, but in my seeming somewhat wanting of wisdom. What? if his deformitie or uglinesse was afterward an instrument to induce others to fall into the sinne of contempt and vice of hatred, or fault of envy for the glory of so rare commendation; or of slander, interpreting his humour to be a franticke ambition; Is there any forme, whence vice (if so it please) may not wrest an occasion, in some manner to exercise it selfe? It had beene more just and therewithall more glorious, of so rare gifts of God, to have made a subject of exemplar vertue and orderly methode. Those which sequester themselves from publike offices, and from this infinite number of thornie and so many-faced rules, which in civill life, binde a man of exact honesty and exquisite integritie: in mine opinion reape a goodly commoditie, what peculiar sharpenesse soever they enjoyne themselves. *It is a kinde of death, to avoide the paine of well-doing, or trouble of well-living.* They may have another prise, but the prise of uneasines me thinkes they never had. Nor that in difficulty, there be any thing that is amid the waves of the worldly multitude, beyond keeping himselfe upright and untainted, answering loyally and truely discharging al members and severall parts of his charge. It is happily more easie for one, in honest sort to neglect and passe over all the sexe, then duely and wholly to maintaine himselfe in his wives company. And a man may more incuriously fall into povertie, then into plenteousnesse; being justly dispenced. Custome, according to reason, doth leade to more

## THE SECOND BOOKE


sharpenesse then abstinence hath. *Moderation is a vertue much more toylesome, then sufferance.* The chaste and well living of yong *Scipio*, hath a thousand severall fashions; that of *Diogenes* but one. This doth by so much more exceed all ordinary lives in innocencie and unspottednesse, as those which are most exquisite and accomplished, exceed in profit and out-goe it in force.

CHAPTER  
XXXIII

The Historie  
of *Spurina*

### THE THIRTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

*Observations concerning the meanes to warre after  
the maner of Julius Cæsar*

T is reported of divers chiefe Generals in warre, that they have particularly affected some peculiar book or other: as, *Alexander* the great highly esteem'd *Homer*; *Scipio Affricanus*, *Xenophon*; *Marcus Brutus*, *Polybius*; *Charles* the fifth, *Philip de Comines*: And it is lately averred, that in some places, and with some men, *Machiavell* is much accompted of: But our late Marshall *Strozzi*, who had made especiall choise to love *Cæsar*; without doubt, I thinke of all other chose best: for truly he ought to be the Breviary of all true Souldiers, as being the absolute and perfect chiefe patterne of Military profession. And God hee knowes with what grace, and with what decorum, hee hath embellished this rich subject, with so pure a kinde of speech, so pleasing and so absolutely perfect, that to my taste, there are no writings in the world, which in this subject may be compared to his. I will heere register certaine particular and rare parts concerning his maner of War, which yet remaine in my memory. His Armie



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXIV

Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius Cæsar

beeing somewhat afrighted, upon the report that ranne of the great forces, which K. *Juba* brought against him, in stead of abating the opinion his souldiers had conceived of it, and to diminish the meanes or forces of his enemie, having caused them to be assembled together, therby to assure and incourage them, he tooke a cleane contrary course, to that which in like cases we are accustomed to do: for he had them trouble themselves no more to finde out the number of the forces, which his enemies brought against him, for himselfe had already true knowledge and certaine intelligence of them, and told them a number farre exceeding both the truth and report of them: following what *Cyrus* commandeth in *Xenophon*. Forasmuch as the deceit is not of like interest, for a man to finde his enemies in effect weaker then he hoped, then stronger indeed, having once conceived an opinion of their weaknesse. He enured all his Souldiers simply to obey, without controlling, gaine-saying, or speaking of their captaines desseignes, which he never communicated unto them, but upon the last point of execution: and was pleased, if by chance they had any inkling of them, so to deceive them, presently to change his opinion: And having prefixed a place to quarter in at night, he hath often beene seene to march further, and lengthen his journey, namely if the weather were foule, or if it rained. The Swizzers in the beginning of his warres in *Gaule*, having sent toward him to give them free passage through the Romanè countries, and he being resolved by force to empeach them, did notwithstanding shew them very good lookes, and tooke certaine dayes respite to give them an answer, during which time he might have leasure to assemble his Armie together. These poore people knew not how wel he could husband time: For he often repeated,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

that *the skill to embrace occasions in the nicke, is the chiefest part of an absolute Captaine*; And truly the diligence he used in all his exploits, is incredible; and the like was never heard of. If he were not over consciencious in that under colour of some treatie, parle or accord, to take any advantage of his enemies; he was as little scrupulous, in that *he required no other vertue in his Souldiers but valour*; and except mutinie and disobedience, he punished not greatly other vices. After his victories, he often gave them the reines to all licenciousnesse, for a while dispensing them from all rules of military discipline; saying moreover, his Souldiers were so well instructed, that though they were in their gayest clothes, pranked up, muskt and perfumed, they would notwithstanding runne furiously to any combate. And in truth he loved to see them richly armed, and made them weare gilt, graven and silvered armours, that their care to keepe them cleane and bright, might make them more fierce, and readie to defend themselves. Speaking to them, he ever called them by the name of Fellow-souldiers; a name used at this day by some Captaines; which his successour *Augustus* afterward reformed, esteeming he had done it for the necessitie of his affaires, and to flatter the hearts of those which followed him but voluntarily;

—*Rheni mihi Cæsar in undis,  
Dux erat, hic socius, facinus quos inquinat, æquat.*  
—LUCAN, v. 289.

When *Cæsar* past the *Rheine* he was my Generall,  
My Fellow heere: sinne, whom it staines, makes  
fellowes-all;

but that this custome was over-lowelie for the dignitie of an Emperor, and chiefe Generall of an armie, and brought up the fashion againe to cal them only Souldiers. To this curtesie, *Cæsar* did nothwithstanding intermixe a great severity, to suppress

CHAPTER  
XXXIV  
Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
manner of  
Julius Cæsar

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXIV

Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius Cæsar

and keep them humble. His ninth Legion having mutined neere unto *Placentia*, he presently cassiered the same with great ignominie unto it, notwithstanding that *Pompey* were yet on foot and strong; and would not receive it into favour, but with humble petition and entreatie. Hee did more appease them by authoritie and audacitie, then by mildenesse and affabilitie. Where he speaketh of his passage over the River of *Rheine*, towards *Germanie*, he saith, that deeming it unworthy the honour of the *Romane* people, his army should passe over in shippes, he caused a bridge to be built, that so it might passe over drie-foot. There he erected that admirable bridge, whereof he so particularly describeth the frame: For he never more willingly dilates himself in describing any of his exploits, then where he endevoreth to represent unto us the subtiltie of his inventions, in such kindes of manuell workes. I have also noted this in his booke, that he much accompteth of his exhortations he made to his Souldiers before any fight, for where he would shew to have beene either surprised or urged, he ever alledgeth this, that he had not so much leasure as to make an oration to his Souldiers or armie: Before that great battell against those of *Tournay*: *Cæsar* (saith he) having disposed of the rest, ranne sodainly whither fortune carried him, to exhort his men: and meeting with the tenth Legion he had not leasure to say any thing else unto them, but that *they should remember their former wonted vertue, they should nothing be danted, they should stoutly resist the encounter of their adversaries*; and forasmuch as the enemy was come within an arrow-shot unto him, he gave the signall of the battell; and sodainely going elsewhere, to encourage others, he found them already together by the eares; See here what himself saith of it in that place. Verely his tongue hath in diverse

## THE SECOND BOOKE

places much bestead, and done him notable service, and even whilst he lived, his military eloquence was so highly regarded, that many of his Armie were seene to copie and keepe his orations; by which meanes diverse volumes were filled with them, and continued many ages after his death. His speech had particular graces, so that his familiar friends, and namely *Augustus*, hearing that rehearsed, which had beene collected of his, knew by the Phrases and words, what was his or not. The first time that with any publike charge he issued out of *Rome*, he came in eight dayes to the river of *Rhone*, having ever one or two Secretaries before him, who continually writ what he endited, and one behinde him that carried his sword. And surely, if one did nothing but runne up and downe, he could very hardly attaine to that promptitude, wherewith ever being victorious, having left *Gaule*, and following *Pompey* to *Brundusium*, in eightene dayes he subdued al *Italic*; returned from *Brundusium* to *Rome*, and thence went even to the heart of *Spaine*, where he past many extreame difficulties, in the warres between *Affranius* and *Petreius*, and at the long siege of *Marseille*: from whence he returned into *Macedon*, overthrew the Romane Armie at *Pharsalia*; thence pursuing *Pompey* he passed into *Egypt*, which he subdued; from *Egypt* he came unto *Syria*, and into the countrie of *Pontus*, where hee fought with *Pharnaces*; thence into *Affrica*, where he defeated *Scipio* and *Juba*, and thence through *Italic* he returned into *Spaine*, where he overthrew *Pompeyes* children.

### CHAPTER XXXIV

Observations concerning the meanes to warre after the manner of Julius Caesar

*Ocior et cæli flammis et tigris fæta.*—*LUCAN*, IV. 505.  
*Ac veluti montis saxum de vertice præcepit*  
*Cum ruit avulsam vento, seu turbidus imber*  
*Proluit, aut annis solvit sublapsa vetustas,*  
*Fertur in abruptum magno mors improbus actu,*  
*Exultatque solo, silvas, armenta, virosque,*  
*Involvens secum.*—*VIRG. Æn.* xli. 684.



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XXXIV

Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius Cæsar

Swifter then breed-yong Tiger, or heav'ns flash,  
And as from mountaines top a headlong stone,  
Rent-off by winde, or by stormes troublous dash  
Washt-off, or loos'd by age of yeares are gone,  
Cross-carried with great force that hill-like masse  
Bounds on the earth, and rowles with it in one  
Woods, heards, and men, and all that neere-it was.

Speaking of the siege of *Avaricum*, he saith, that it was his custome, both day and night, ever to be neere and about such workemen as he had set a worke. In all enterprises of consequence he was ever the first skout-man, or survayer of any place: And his armie never approached place, which he had not viewd or survayed himselfe. And if wee may believe *Suetonius*, at what time he attempted to passe over into *England*, he was the first man that sounded the passage. He was wont to say, *that he esteemed that victory much more which was conducted by advise, and managed by counsell, then by maine strength and force.* In the warre against *Petreius* and *Afranius*, Fortune presenting an apparant occasion of advantage unto him, he saith, that he refused it, hoping with a little more time, but with lesse hazard, to see the overthrow of his enemy. Where he also plaid a notable part, to command all his Armie to swimme over a river, without any necessitie,

—*rapuitque ruens in prælia miles,  
Quod fugiens timuisset iter, mox uda receptis  
Membra foveat armis, gelidosque à gurgite cursu  
Restituant artus.*—*LUCAN*, iv. 151.

The Souldier rids that way in hast to fight,  
Which yet he would have fearde in haste of flight;  
His limbs with water wet and cold before,  
With armes he covers, running doth restore.

I finde him somewhat more warie and considerate in his enterprises, then *Alexander*; for the latter seemeth to seeke out, and by maine force to runne

## THE SECOND BOOKE

into dangers, as an impetuous or raging torrent, which without heede, discretion, or choise, shockes and checkmates what ere it meeteth withall.

*Sic lauriformis valetur Aufidus,  
Qui Regna Daunij perfudit Appuli,  
Dum aruit, horrendamque callis  
Diluvium meditatatur agris.*—Hon. Car. iv. Od. xiv. 25.

So Ball-fac'd *Aufidus* still rowling growes,  
Which through *Apulias* ancient kingdome flows,  
When he doth rage in threatening meditation  
To bring on faire fields fearefull inundation.

CHAPTER  
XXXIV  
Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius Cæsar

And to say truth, his hap was to be most employed in the spring-time, and first heate of his age: whereas *Cæsar* was well stricken in yeares, when he beganne to follow armes. *Alexander* was of a more cholerike, sanguine and violent constitution, which humour hee stirred up with wine, whereof *Cæsar* was very abstinent. But where occasions of necessitie were offered, and where the subject required it, there was never man that so little regarded his person. As for me, me seemeth I reade in diverse of his exploits, a certaine resolution rather to lose himselfe, then to abide the brunt or shame to be overthrowne. In that great battel, which he fought against those of *Turnay*, seeing the vangard of his army somewhat enclining to route, even as he was, without shield or target, he ranne headlong to the front of his enemies: Which many other times happened unto him. Hearing once how his men were besieged, he past disguised through the midst and thickest of his enemies campe, so to encourage and awe them with his presence. Having crossed the way to *Dyrrhachium*, with very few forces, and perceiving the rest of his army (the Conduct whereof hee had left unto *Antonius*,) to be somewhat slow in comming, he undertooke all alone, to repasse the Sea, notwithstanding a violent and raging Tempest; and secretly



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXIV

Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius Cæsar

stole himselfe away to fetch the rest of his forces: All the havens on that side, yea and all the Sea being possessed by *Pompey*. And concerning the enterprises he underwent with armed hand, there are divers of them, which in respect of the hazard, exceede all discourse of military reason: for, with how weake meanes undertooke he to subdue the Kingdome of *Ægypt*, and afterward to front the forces of *Scipio* and *Juba*, which were tenne parts greater than his! Mee thinkes such men have had a kinde of more than humane confidence of their fortune: And himselfe was wont to say, that *Haughty enterprises were to be executed and not consulted upon*. After the battell of *Pharsalia*, having sent his Armie before into *Asia* and himselfe with onely one ship passing through the straight of *Hellespont*, he met on the Seas with *Lucius Cassius*, attended on with ten tall shippes of Warre; he was so farre from shunning him, that he durst not only stay for him, but with all haste make toward and summon him, to yeeld himselfe to his mercie; which he did. Having undertaken that furious siege of *Alexia*, wherein were fourscore thousand men of defence, and all Francee up in armes, with a resolution to runne upon him and raise the siege, and having an armie on foote of one hundred and nine thousand horse, and two hundred fortie thousand foote: What a fond hardy and outrageous confidence was it in him, that he would never give over his attempt and resolve in two so great difficulties together? Which he notwithstanding underwent: And after he had obtained so notable a battell of those which were without, he soone reduced those that were besieged in the Towne to his mercy. The very like happened to *Lucullus* at the siege of *Tigranocerta*, against King *Tigranes*, but with an unlike condition, seeing his enemies demisnesse, with whom *Lucullus* was to deale. I



## THE SECOND BOOKE

will heere note two rare and extraordinary events, touching the siege of *Alexia*; the one, that the French men being all assembled together with a purpose to meet with *Cæsar*, having diligently survaied and exactly numbred all their forces, resolved in their counsell to cutte-off a great part of this huge multitude for feare they might breed a confusion. This example is new, to feare to be over many; yet if it be well taken, it is very likely, that *The bodie of an armie ought to have a well proportioned greatnesse, and ordered to indifferent bounds.* Whether it be for the difficulty to feed the same or to lead it in order and keepe it in awe. And we may easily verifie by examples, that *These numerous and infinite Armies have seldome brought any notable thing to passe:* According to *Cyrus* his saying in *Xenophon.* *It is not the multitude of men, but the number of good men that causeth an advantage:* The rest rather breeding confusion and trouble, than helpe or availe. And *Bajazeth* tooke the chieftest foundation of his resolution, against the advise of all his Captaines, to joyne fight with *Tamburlane*, onely because the innumerable number of men, which his enimie brought into the field, gave him an assured hope of route and confusion. *Scanderbeg*, a sufficient and most expert Judge in such a case, was wont to say, that tenne or twelve thousand trusty and resolute fighting men, ought to suffice any sufficient Chieftaine of warre, to warrant his reputation in any kinde of military exploite. The other point, which seemeth to be repugnant both unto custome and reason of Warre, is, that *Vercingetorix*, who was appointed chiefe Generall of all the forces of the revolted *Gaules*, undertooke to immure and shutte himselfe into *Alexia.* For, *He that hath the commaundement of a whole Countrey, ought never to engage himselfe, except in cases of extremitie, and where all his rest*

CHAPT  
XXXI

Observa  
concerni  
the mean  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius C

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXIV

Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
maner of  
Julius Cæsar

*hath more sway over us, then reason:* Yet hath it chanced in the war against *Hannibal*, that imitating the example of the Romane peoples liberalitie in the Citie, the Souldiers and Captaines refused their pay, and in *Marcellus* his campe, those were called mercenary, that tooke any pay. Having had some defeate neere unto *Dyrrachium*, his souldiers came voluntarily before him, and offered themselves to be punished; so that he was more troubled to comfort, then to chide them. One onely of his *Cohortes* (whereof ten went to a Legion) held fight above foure howres with foure of *Pompeies* whole Legions, until it was well-nigh all defeated with the multitude and force of arrowes: And in his trenches were afterward found one hundred and thirtie thousand shafts. A Souldier of his, named *Scæva*, who commanded one of the entrances, did so invincibly defend and keepe himselfe, that he had one of his eyes thrust out, and one shoulder and one thigh thrust through, and his shield flawed and pearced in two hundred and thirtie severall places. It hath befallen to many of his Souldiers, being taken prisoners, to chuse rather to die then promise to follow any other faction, or receive any other entertainment. *Granius Petronius* taken by *Scipio* in *Affricke*: After *Scipio* had caused all his fellowes to bee put to death, sent him word that he gave him his life, forsomuch as he was a man of ranke and a Questor: *Petronius* answered, that *Cæsars Souldiers were wont to give life to others, and not accept it themselves*: and therewithall with his owne hands killed himselfe. Infinite examples there are of their fidelitie. That part, which they acted, who were beseiged in *Salona*, a Citie which tooke part with *Cæsar* against *Pompey*, must not be forgotten, by reason of a rare accident that there hapned. *Marcus Octavius*, having long time beleagred the Town, they within were reduced to

## THE SECOND BOOKE

such extremitie and pinching necessitie of all things, that to supply the great want they had of men, most of them being alreadie or hurt or dead; they had set all their slaves at libertie, and for the behoofe of their engines, were compelled to cut off all their womens haire, to make ropes with them; besides a wonderfull lacke of victualls, resolving notwithstanding never to yeeld themselves: After they had a long time lingered the siege, and that *Octavius* was thereby become more carelesse, and lesse heeding or attentive to his enterprise; they one day about high noone (having first ranged their wives and children upon the walles, to set the better face upon the matter) rushed out in such a furie upon the beseigers, that having put to rout and defeated the first, the second, and third *corps de garde*; then the fourth and the rest: and having forced them to quit their trenches, chased them even to their shippes: and *Octavius* with much adoe saved himselfe in *Dyrrachium*, where *Pompey* was. I remember not at this time, to have read of any other example, where the beleagred doe in grosse beate the beleaggers, and get the maistry and possession of the field: nor that a sallie hath drawne a meere and absolute victory of a battell into consequence.

CHAPTER  
XXXIV  
—  
Observations  
concerning  
the meanes  
to warre  
after the  
manner of  
Julius Caesar



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## THE THIRTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

*Of three good women*

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women



THEY are not to be had by dozens, as each one knowes, namely in rights and duties of mariage; For, it is a bargaine full of so many thornie circumstances, that it is hard the will of a woman should long keepe her selfe whole and perfect therein. And although men have somewhat a better condition in the same, yet have they much to doe. The touchstone and perfect triall of a good mariage, respects the time that the societie continueth; whether it have constantly beene milde, loyall and commodious. In our age, they more commonly reserve to enstall their good offices, and set forth the vehemence of their affections toward their lost husbands: And then seeke they at least to yeeld some testimonie of their good wil. O late testimonie and out of season, whereby they rather shew, they never love them but when they are dead. Our life is full of combustion and scolding, but our disease full of love and of curtesie. As fathers conceale affection toward their children; so they to maintaine an honest respect, cloake their love toward their husbands. This mystery answereth not my taste. They may long enough scratch and dishevell themselves; let me enquire of a chambermaide or of a secretarie, how they were, how they did, and how they have lived together: I can never forget this good saying, *Jactantius mœrent, quæ minus dolent, They keepe a howling with most ostentation, who are lesse sorrowfull at heart.* Their lowering and puling is hatefull to the living, and vaine to the dead. *Wee shall easily dispence with them*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*to laugh at us when we are dead, upon condition they smile upon us while wee live.* Is not this the way to revive a man with spite; that he who hath spitten in my face when I was living, shal come and claw my feet when I am dead? If there be any honour for a woman to weepe for hir husband, it belongs to hir that hath smiled upon him when she had him. Such as have wept when they lived, let them laugh when they are dead, as well outwardly as inwardly. Moreover, regard not those blubbred eyes, nor that pittie moving voice; but view that demeanor, that colour and cheerefull good plight of those cheekes, under their great vailes; thence it is she speaks plaine French. There are few whose health doth not daily grow better and better; a quality that cannot lie. This ceremonious countenance looketh not so much backward, as forward: It is rather a purchase then a payment. In mine infancie an honest and most faire Ladie (who yet liveth, the widdowe of a Prince) had somewhat more of I wot not what in her attires, then the lawes of widdowhood would well permit. To such as blamed hir for it: It is (said shee) because I intend no more new acquaintances, and have no mind at all to marry againe. Because I will not altogether dissent from our custome, I have heere made choise of three women, who have also imployed the utmost endeavor of their goodnes and affection, about their husbands deaths. Yet are they examples somewhat different and so urging that they hardly draw life into consequence. *Plinie* the yonger, had dwelling neere to a house of his in *Italic*, a neighbour wonderfully tormented with certaine ulcers, which much troubled him in his secret parts. His wife perceiving him to droope and languish away, entreated him she might leasurely search and neerely view the quality of his disease, and she would more freely

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

then any other tell him what he was to hope for: Which having obtained, and curiously considered the same, she found it impossible ever to be cured, and all he might expect was but to lead a long, dolorous, and languishing life; and therefore for his more safetie and soveraigne remedie, perswaded him to kill himselfe. And finding him somewhat nice and backward to effect so rude an enterprise: Thinke not my deare friend (quoth shee) but that the sorrowes and griefes, I see thee feelee, touch me as neere and more, if more may be, as thy selfe, and that to be rid of them, I will applie the same remedie to my selfe, which I prescribe to thee. I will accompany thee in thy cure as I have done in thy sicknesse: remoove all feare, and assure thy selfe, we shall have pleasure in this passage, which shall deliver us from all torments, for we will happily goe together: That said, and having cheared up hir husbands courage, she determined they should both headlong throw themselves into the sea from out a window of their house, that overlooked the same: and to maintaine this loyall, vehement and never to be severed affection to the end, wherewith shee had during his life embraced him, she would also have him die in her armes; and fearing they might faile her, and through the fall, or feare or apprehension her hold-fast might be loosed, shee caused herselfe to be fast bound unto him by the middle: And thus for the ease of her husbands life she was contented to forgoe her owne. She was but of meane place and low fortune: and amidde such condition of people, it is not so strange to see some parts of rare vertue and exemplar goodnesse.

—*extrema per illos*

*Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit.*—VING. Georg. ii. 473.

Justice departing from the earth did take  
Of them her leave, through them last passage make.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

The other two are noble and Rich; where examples of vertue are rarely lodged. *Arria* wife unto *Cecinna Pictus*, a man that had been Consul, was mother of another *Arria*, wife to *Thrasea Pictus* whose vertue was so highly renowned during the time of *Nero*; and by meane of his sonne-in-law, grandmother to *Pannia*. For, the resemblance of these mens and womens names and fortunes hath made diverse to mistake them. This first *Arria*, her husband *Cecinna Pictus* having beene taken prisoner by the Souldiers of *Claudius* the Emperour, after the overthrow of *Scribonianus*, whose faction he had followed, entreated those who led him prisoner to *Rome*, to take her into their ship, where for the service of her husband shee should be of lesse charge and incommodie to them, then a number of other persons, which they must necessarily have, and that she alone might supply and stead him in his chamber, in his kitchen and all other offices; which they utterly refused, and so hoised sailes, but shee leaping into a fishers boate, that she immediately hired, followed him aloofe from the further shore of *Sclaviona*. Being come to *Rome*, one day, in the Emperours presence, *Junia* the widdow of *Scribonianus*, by reason of the neerenesse and society of their fortunes, familiarly accosted her, but she rudely, with these words, thrust her away. What (quoth shee) shall I speake to thee, or shall I listen what thou saiest? Thou, in whose lappe *Scribonianus* thy husband was slaine, and thou yet livest? and thou breathest? These words with divers other signes, made her kinsfolkes and friends perceiue that she purposed to make herselfe away, as impatient to abide her husbands fortune. And *Thrasea* her son in law, taking hold of her speeches, beseeching her that she would not so unbecidily spoile her selfe, he thus bespake her. What? If I were in *Cecinnaes* Fortune or the like, would

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

you have my wife your daughter to do so? What else? make you a question of it? (answered she) Yes marry would I, had she lived so long and in so good-agreeing sort with thee, as I have done with my husband. These and such like answers, encreased the care they had of her; and made them more heedfull to watch, and neerely to look unto her. One day, after she had uttered these words to her keepers; you may looke long enough to me, well may you make me die worse, but you shall never be able to keepe me from dying: and therewith furiously flinging her selfe out of a chaire (wherein she sate) with all the strength she had, she fiercely ranne her head against the next wall; with which blow having sore hurt her selfe, and falling into a dead swowne, after they had with much adoe brought her to her selfe againe: Did I not tell you (quoth she) that if you kept me from one easi death, I would choose another, how hard and difficult soever? The end of so admirable a vertue was this. Her husband *Pætus* wanting the courage to doe himselfe to death, unto which the Emperors cruelty reserved him; one day, having first employed discourses and exhortations, befitting the counsell she gave him to make himselfe away, shee tooke a Dagger that her husband wore, and holding it outright in her hand, for the period of her exhortation: Doe thus *Pætus* (said she) and at that instant, stabbing her selfe mortally to the heart, and presently pulling the dagger out againe she reached the same unto her husband, and so yeelded up the ghost, uttering this noble, generous and immortall speech, *Pæte non dolet*, she had not the leasure to pronounce other than these three wordes, in substance materiall and worthy her selfe, *Holde Pætus, it hath done me no hurt.*

*Castæ suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto,  
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis;*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci, non dolet, inquit,  
Sed quod tu facies, ut mihi Parte dolet.*

— MART. i. *Epiq.* xiv. 1.

Chast *Irria* when she gave her *Partus* that sharpe sword,  
Which from her bowells she had drawne forth bleeding new.  
The wound I gave and have, if you will trust my word,  
Griev's not, said she, but that which shall be made by you.

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

It is much more lively in his owne naturall, and of a richer Sense; for both her husbands wound and death, and her owne hurts, she was so farre from grieving to have beene the counselor and motive of them, that shee rejoyced to have performed so haughty and couragious an act, onely for the behoofe of her deere husband, and at the last gaspe of her life, she only regarded him; and to remove all feare from him, to follow her in death, which *Partus* beholding, he immediately wounded himselfe with the same dagger, ashamed (as I suppose) to have had need of so deare an instruction, and precious a teaching. *Pompea Paulina*, an high and noble-borne yong Romane Ladie, had wedded *Seneca*, being very aged. *Nero* (his faire disciple) having sent his Satellites or officers toward him, to denounce the decree of his death to him: which in those dayes was done after this manner. When the Roman Emperors had condemned any man of quality to death, they were wont to send their officers unto him, to chuse what death he pleased, and to take it within such and such a time, which according to the temper of their choller, they prescribed unto him, sometimes shorter, and some times longer, giving him that time to dispose of his affaires, which also by reason of some short warning they divers times tooke from him: And if the condemned partie seemed in any sort to strive against their will, they would often send men of purpose to execute him, either cutting the veins of his armes and legs, or compelling him to take and



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

you have my wife your daughter to do so? What else? make you a question of it? (answered she) Yes marry would I, had she lived so long and in so good-agreeing sort with thee, as I have done with my husband. These and such like answers, encreased the care they had of her; and made them more heedfull to watch, and neerely to look unto her. One day, after she had uttered these words to her keepers; you may looke long enough to me, well may you make me die worse, but you shall never be able to keepe me from dying: and therewith furiously flinging her selfe out of a chaire (wherein she sate) with all the strength she had, she fiercely ranne her head against the next wall; with which blow having sore hurt her selfe, and falling into a dead swowne, after they had with much adoe brought her to her selfe againe: Did I not tell you (quoth she) that if you kept me from one easi death, I would choose another, how hard and difficult soever? The end of so admirable a vertue was this. Her husband *Pætus* wanting the courage to doe himselfe to death, unto which the Emperors cruelty reserved him; one day, having first employed discourses and exhortations, befitting the counsell she gave him to make himselfe away, shee tooke a Dagger that her husband wore, and holding it outright in her hand, for the period of her exhortation: Doe thus *Pætus* (said she) and at that instant, stabbing her selfe mortally to the heart, and presently pulling the dagger out againe she reached the same unto her husband, and so yeilded up the ghost, uttering this noble, generous and immortall speech, *Pæte non dolet*, she had not the leasure to pronounce other than these three wordes, in substance materiall and worthy her selfe, *Holde Pætus, it hath done me no hurt.*

*Castæ suo gladium cùm traderet Arria Pæto,  
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis;*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

without griefe but with exceeding joy. Wherefore my deere-deere heart, do not dishonor it by thy teares, lest thou seem to love thy selfe more than my reputation. Asswage thy sorrowes, and comfort thy selfe in the knowledge thou hast had of me and of my actions; leading the rest of thy life by the honest occupations to which thou art addicted. To whom *Paulina*, having somewhat rouzed her drooping spirits, and by a thrice-noble affection awakened the magnanimitie of her high-setled courage, answered thus: No *Seneca*, thinke not that in this necessitie I will leave you without my company.

CHAPTER  
XXXV  
Of three  
good women

I would not have you imagin that the vertuous examples of your life have not also taught me to die: And when shal I be able to do it or better, or more honestly, or more to mine own liking, then with your selfe? And be resolved I wil go with you and be partaker of your fortune. *Seneca* taking so generous a resolve, and glorious a determination of his wife in good part, and to free himselfe from the feare he had to leave her after his death, to his enemies mercie and cruelty: Oh my dear *Paulina*, I had (quoth he) perswaded thee what I thought was convenient, to leade thy life more happily, and doost thou then rather choose the honour of a glorious death? Assuredly I will not envy thee: Be the constancie and resolution answerable to our common end, but be the beautie and glory greater on thy side. That said, the veines of both their armes were cut, to the end they might bleede to death; but because *Senecaes* were somewhat shrunken up through age and abstinence, and his bloud could have no speedy course, he commaunded the veines of his thighes to be launced: And fearing lest the torments he felt, might in some sort entender his wifes heart; as also to deliver himselfe from the affliction, which greatly yearned him to see her in so pittious plight: after he



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

had most lovingly taken leave of her, he besought her to be pleased she might be caried into the next chamber, which was accordingly performed. But all those incisions being unable to make him die, he willed *Statius Anneus* his Phisition to give him some poysoned potion, which wrought but small effect in him, for through the weaknesse and coldnesse of his members, it could not come unto his heart. And therefore they caused a warme bath to be prepared, wherein they layd him, then perceiving his end to approach, so long as he had breath, he continued his excellent discourses, concerning the subject of the estate wherein he found himselfe, which his Secretaries, so long as they could heare his voice, collected very diligently, whose last words continued long time after in high esteem and honor amongst the better sort of men, as Oracles; but they were afterward lost, and great pittie it is they never came unto our handes. But when he once beganne to feele the last pangs of death, taking some of the water, wherein he lay bathing, all bloody, he therewith washed his head, saying, I vow this water unto *Jupiter* the Deliverer. *Nero* being advertised of all this, fearing lest *Paulinaes* death (who was one of the best alied Ladies in *Rome*, and to whom he bare no particular grudge) might cause him some reproach, sent in all post haste to have her incisions closed up againe, and if possibly it could be, to save her life; which hir servants [unwitting to] her, performed, she being more then halfe dead and voyd of any sence. And that afterward, contrary to her intent, she lived, it was very honourable, and as befitted her vertue, shewing by the pale hew and wanne colour of her face, how much of her life she had wasted by her incisions. Loe heere my three true stories, which in my conceit are as pleasant and as tragicall, as any we devise at our pleasures, to



## THE SECOND BOOKE

please the vulgar sort withall: And I wonder, that those who invent so many fabulous tales, do not rather make choise of infinite excellent, and quaint stories, that are found in bookes, wherein they should have lesse trouble to write them, and might doubtlesse proove more pleasing to the hearer, and profitable to the Reader. And who-soever would undertake to frame a compleate and well joynted bodie of them, neede neither employe nor adde any thing of his owne unto it except the ligaments, as the soldring of another mettall, and by this meanes might compact sundry events of all kindes, disposing and diversifying them, according as the beauty and lustre of the worke should require: And very neere, as *Ovid* hath sown and contrived his *Metamorphosis*, with that strange number of diverse fables. In the last couple this is also worthy consideration, that *Paulina* offreth willingly to leave her life for her husbands sake, and that her husband had also other times quit death for the love of her. There is no great counterpoyze in this exchange for us: but according to his *Stoike* humour, I suppose he perswaded himselfe to have done as much for hir, prolonging his life for hir availe, as if he had died for hir. In one of his letters, he writeth to *Lucilius*, after he hath given him to understand how an ague having surprised him in *Rome*, contrary to his wives opinion, who would needs have stayed him, he sodainly tooke his Coach, to goe unto a house of his into the country; and how he told her that the ague he had was no bodily fever, but of the place: and followeth thus: *At last she let me goe, earnestly recommending my health unto me. Now I who know, how her life lodgeth in mine, begin to provide for my self, that consequently I may provide for her: The priviledge my age hath bestowed on me, making me more constant, and more resolute*

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXV

Of three  
good women

*in many things, I lose it; when ever I call to minde, that in this aged corps there harboureth a yoong woman, to whom I bring some profit. Since I cannot induce her to love me more couragiously, shee induceth me to love my selfe more carefully; for something must be lent to honest affections, and sometimes, although occasions urge us to the contrary, life must be revoked againe, yea with torment. The soule must be held fast with ones teeth, since the lawe to live [in] honest men, is not to live as long as they please, but so long as they ought. He who esteemeth not his wife or a friend so much, as that he will not lengthen his life for them, and wil obstinately die, that man is over-nice, and too effeminate: The soule must commaund that unto her selfe, when the utilitie of our friends requireth it: we must sometimes lend our selves unto our friends, and when we would die for us, we ought for their sakes to interrupt our desaigne. It is a testimony of high courage to returne to life for the respect of others as diverse notable men have done: and to preserve age is a part of singular integritie (the chiefest commoditie whereof, is the carelesnesse of her continuance, and a more couragious and disdainefull use of life) if a man perceive such an office to be pleasing, acceptable and profitable to any well-affected friend. And who doeth it, receiveth thereby a gratefull meede and pleasing recompence: for what can bee sweeter, than to be so deare unto his wife, that in respect of her a man become more deere unto himself? So my Paulina, hath not onely charged me with her feare, but also with mine. It hath not beene sufficient for me to consider, how resolutely I might die, but I have also considered how irresolutely she might endure it. I have enforced my selfe to live: And to live is sometime magnanimitie: Reade heere his owne wordes, as excellent as is his use.*

# THE SECOND BOOKE

## THE THIRTY-SIXTH CHAPTER

*Of the worthiest and most excellent men*



**I**F a man should demaund of mee, **CHAPTER, XXXVI**  
which of all men that ever came to  
my knowledge, I would make choise  
of, me seemeth, I finde three, who  
have beene excellent above all others.  
The one is, *Homer*, not that *Aristotle*  
or *Varro*, (for example sake) were not peradventure  
as wise and as sufficient as he : Nor that *Virgil*, (and  
possibly in his owne arte) be not comparable unto  
him. I leave that to their judgements that know  
them both. I who know but one of them, according  
to my skill may onely say this, that I cannot be  
perswaded, the Muses themselves did ever go beyond  
the Roman.

*Tale facit carmen docta testudine, quale*

*— Cynthiaus impositis temperat articulis.*

— PROPERT. ii. *El.* xxxiv. 79.

He on his learned Lute such verse doth play,  
As *Phœbus* should thereto his fingers lay.

In which Judgement, this must notwithstanding  
not be forgotten, that *Virgil* doth especially derive  
his sufficiencie from *Homer*, and he is his guide and  
Schoolemaster, and that but one only glance or  
sentence of the *Iliads*, hath given both body and  
matter to that great and divine Poem of the *Æneid*.  
My meaning is not to account so : I entermix divers  
other circumstances, which yeeld this man most  
admirable unto me, and as it were beyond humane  
condition. And truly I am often amazed, that he  
who hath produced, and by his authority brought so



# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

many Deities in credit with the World, hath not obtained to be reputed a God himselfe. Being blind and indigent; having lived before ever the Sciences were redacted into strict rules and certaine observations, he had so perfect knowledge of them, that all those which since his time have labored to establish pollicies or Common-wealths, to manage warres, and to write either of Religion or Philosophy, in what Sect soever or of all Artes, have made use of him, as of an absolutely-perfect Master in the knowledge of al things; and of his Bookes, as of a Seminary, a Spring-garden or Store-house of all kinds of sufficiency and learning.

*Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,  
Plenus ac melius Chrysippo, ac Crantore dicit.*

—HOR. *Epist.* xxiii.

What is faire, What is foule, What profit may, What not,  
Better than *Crantor* or *Chrysippus*, *Homer* wrot.

And as another saith :

—à quo ceu fonte perrenni  
*Vatum Pieris labra rigantur aquis.*

—OVID, *Am.* iii. *El.* viii. 25.

By whom, as by an ever-flowing-filling spring,  
With Muses liquor poets lippes are bath'd to sing.

And another :

*Adde Heliconiadum comites, quorum unus Homerus  
Astra potitus.*—LUCR. iii. 1081.

Muses companions adde to these, of all  
One onely *Homer* hath in heav'n his stall.

And another :

—cujusque ex ore profuso  
*Omnis posteritas latices in carmina duxit,  
Amnemque in tenues, ausa est deducere rivos :*  
*Unius facunda bonis.*—MANIL. *Ast.* ii. 8.

## THE SECOND BOOKE

From whose large mouth for verse all that since live  
Drew water, and grew bolder to derive  
Into thinne shallow rivers his deepe floods;  
Richly luxuriant in one mans good.

### CHAPTER XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

It is against natures course, that he hath made the most excellent production, that may be: for, the ordinary birth of things is imperfect: They are augmented by encrease, and corroborated by growth. He hath reduced the infancy of poesie, and divers other Sciences to be ripe, perfect and compleate. By which reason he may be termed the first and last of poets, following the noble testimony, antiquity hath left us of him, that having had no man before him, whom he might imitate, so hath hee had none after him, could imitate him. His wordes (according to *Aristotle*) are the onely words that have motion and action: they are the onely substantial Wordes. *Alexander* the Great, having lighted upon a rich casket amongst *Darius* his spoiles, appoynted the same to be safely kept for himselfe, to keepe his *Homer* in: saying, he was the best adviser, and faithfullest counselor he had in his military affaires. By the same reason said *Cliomenes*, sonne to *Anaxandridas*, that hee was the Lacedemonians Poet; for he was an excellent good teacher or Master of Warrelike discipline. This singular praise and particular commendation hath also been given him by *Plutarke* where he saith, that he is the only author in the world, who yet never distasted Reader, or glutted man; ever shewing himself other, and different to the Readers; and ever flourishing with a new grace. That Wagge *Alcibiades*, demanding one of *Homers* bookes of one who professed letters, because he had it not, gave him a whirrit on the eare; as if a man should finde one of our Priests, without a Breviarie. *Xenophanes* one day made his moane to *Hieron* the Tyrant of *Siracusa*, that he was so poore as he had

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men.

not wherewithall to finde two servants: How cometh that to passe? (answered *Hieron*). *Homer*, who was much poorer than thou art, dead as he is, findeth more then tenne thousand. What left *Panæti*us unsaide, when he named *Plato* the *Homer of Philosophers*? Besides what glory may be compared to his? There is nothing, liveth so in mens mouthes as his name and his workes; nothing so knowne and received as *Troy*, as *Helen* and her Warres, which peradventure never were. Our Children are yet called by the names he invented three thousand yeeres since and more. Who knoweth not *Hector*? Who hath not heard of *Achilles*? Not onely some particular races, but most nations seeke to derive themselves from his inventions. *Machomet*, the second of that name, Emperour of Turkes, writing to Pope *Pius* the second: I wonder (saith he) how the Italians will bandie against me, seeing we have our common off-spring from the Trojans; and I as well as they have an interest to revenge the blood of *Hector* upon the Græcians, whom they favour against me. Is it not a worthie Comedie, whereof Kings, Commonwealths, Principalities, and Emperours, have for many ages together played their parts, and to which this great Universe serveth as a Theatre? seven cities of *Greece* strived amongst themselves about the places of his birth. So much honour his very obscuritie procured him.

*Smyrna, Rhodos, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos, Athenæ.*

—A. GEL. Noct. Att. iii. c. 11.

*Rhodes, Salamis, Colophon, Chios, Argos, Smyrna, with Athens.*

The other is *Alexander* the great. For, who shall consider his age, wherein hee beganne his enterprises; the small meanes he had to ground so glorious a desseigne upon, the authoritie he attained unto in



## THE SECOND BOOKE

his infancy, amongst the greatest Commaunders, and most experienced Captaines in the world, by whom he was followed: the extraordinary favour, wherwith fortune embraced him, and seconded so many of his haughty-dangerous exploits, which I may in a manner call rash or fond-hardie.

CHAPTER  
XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

*Impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti  
Obstaret, gaudensque viam fecisse ruinar.*

—LUCAN, l. 148.

While he shot at the high'st, all that might stay  
He for'st, and joyde with ruine to make way.

That eminent greatnesse, to have at the age of thirtie yeares passed victorious through al the habitable earth, and but with halfe the life of a man to have attained the utmost endeavour of humane nature; so that you cannot imagine his continuance lawfull, and the lasting of his increase in fortune, and progres in vertue even unto a just terme of age, but you must suppose something above man, to have caused so many Royal branches to issue from out the loines of his Souldiers, leaving the world after his death to be shared between foure successours, onely Captaines of his Arnie, whose succeeders, have so long time since continued, and descendents maintained that large possession. So infinite, rare and excellent vertues that were in him, as justice, temperance, liberalitie, integritie in words, love toward his, and humanitie toward the conquered. For in truth, his maners seeme to admit no just cause of reproach: indeed some of his particular, rare and extraordinary actions, may in some sort be taxed. For it is impossible to conduct so great, and direct so violent motions with the strict rules of justice. Such men ought to be judged in grose, by the mistris end of their actions. The ruine of *Thebes*; the murder of *Menander*, and of *Ephestions* physition; the massacre

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

of so many Persian prisoners at once: of a troupe of Indian Souldiers, not without some prejudice unto his word and promise: and of the Cosseyans and their little children, are escapes somewhat hard to be excused. For, concerning *Clitus*, the fault was expiated beyond it's merit; and that action, as much as any other, witnesseth the integritie and cheerefulness of his complexion, and that it was a complexion in it self excellently formed to goodnesse; And it was wittily said of one, that *he had vertues by nature, and vices by accident*. Concerning the point, that he was somewhat to lavish a boaster, and over impatient to heare himselfe ill spoken of; and touching those mangers, armes, and bits, which he caused to be scattered in *India*, respecting his age and the prosperitie of his fortune they are in my conceit pardonable in him. He that shall also consider his many military vertues, as diligence, foresight, patience; discipline, policie, magnanimitie, resolution and good fortune; wherin though *Haniballs* authority had not taught it us, he *hath beene the first and chiefe of men*: the rare beauties, matchlesse features, and incomparable conditions of his person, beyond all comparison, and wonder breeding; his carriage; demeanor, and venerable behaviour, in a face so young, so vermeill, and heart enflaming:

*Qualis ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,  
Quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignes.  
Extulit os sacrum cælo, tenebrasque resolvit.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* viii. 589.

As when the day starre washt in Ocean streames,  
Which *Venus* most of all the starres esteemes,  
Shewes sacred light, shakes darknesse-off with  
beames.

The excellencie of his wit, knowledge and capacity; the continuance and greatnesse of his glory, unspotted, untainted, pure and free from all blame

## THE SECOND BOOKE

or envie: insomuch as long after his death, it was religiously beleeved of many, that the medalls or brooches representing his person brought good lucke unto such as wore or had them about them. And that more Kings and Princes have written his gestes and actions, then any other historians, of what quality soever, have registred the gests, or collected the actions of any other King or Prince that ever was: And that even at this day, the Mahometists, who contenne all other histories, by speciall priviledge, allow, receive, and onely honour his. All which premises duely considered together, hee shall confesse, I have had good reason to preferre him before *Cæsar* himselfe who alone might have made me doubt of my choise. And it must needes bee granted, that in his exploites there was more of his owne: but more of fortunes in *Alexanders* atchievements. They have both had many things mutually alike, and *Cæsar* happily some greater. They were two quicke and devouring fires, or two swift and surrounding streames able to ravage the world by sundry wayes.

CHAPTER  
XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

*Et velut immissi diversis partibus ignes  
Arentem in silvam, et virgulta sonantia lauro:  
Aut ubi decursu rapido de montibus altis  
Dant sonitum spumosi amnes, et in æquora currunt,  
Quisque suum populatus iter.— xii. 521.*

As when on divers sides fire is applied  
To crackling bay-shrubs, or to woods Sunne dried,  
Or as when foaming streames from mountaines hie,  
With downe-fall swift resound, and to sea flie;  
Each-one doth havoocke-out his way thereby.

But grant *Cæsars* ambition were more moderate, it is so unhappy, in that it met with this vile subject of the subversion of his countrie, and universall empairing of the world; that all parts impartially collected and put together in the balance, I must



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

necessarily bend to *Alexanders* side. The third, and in my judgement, most excellent man, is *Epaminondas*. Of glorie he hath not so much as some, and is farre shorte of diverse (which well considered is no substantiall part of the thing) in resolution and true valour, not of that which is set on by ambition, but of that, which wisdom and reason may settle in a well disposed minde, hee had as much as may be imagined or wished for. He hath in mine opinion, made as great triall of his vertues, as ever did *Alexander* or *Cæsar*: for although his exploits of warre be not so frequent, and so high raised, yet being throughly considered, they are as weightie, as resolute, as constant, yea and as authentically a testimony of hardnes and military sufficiencie, as any mans else. The Græcians, without any contradiction afforded him the honour, to entitle him the chiefe and first man among themselves: and *to be the first and chiefe man of Greece, is without all question to bee chiefe and first man of the world*. Touching his knowledge and worth, this ancient judgement doth yet remaine amongst us, that *never was man who knew so much, nor never man that spake lesse then he*. For he was, by Sect a Pythagorian; and what he spake, no man ever spake better: An excellent and most perswasive Orator was hee. And concerning his maners and conscience therein he farre outwent all that ever medled with managing affaires: For in this one part, which ought especially to be noted, and which alone declareth what we are, and which only I counterpoise to al others together, he giveth place to no Philosopher; no not to *Socrates* himselfe. In whom innocencie is a quality, proper, chiefe, constant, uniforme and incorruptible. In comparison of which, it seemeth in *Alexander* subalternall, uncertaine, variable, effeminate and accidentall. Antiquitie judged that precisely to sift out, and curiously

## THE SECOND BOOKE

to prie into all other famous Captaines, there is in every one severally some speciall quality, which makes him renowned and famous; In this man alone, it is a vertue and sufficiencie, every where compleate and alike; which in all offices of humane life, leaveth nothing more to be wished-for. Be it in publike or private; in peaceable negotiations or warlike occupations; be it to live or die, greatly or gloriously, I know no forme or fortune of man, that I admire or regard, with so much honour, with so much love. True it is, I finde this obstinacie in povertie, somewhat scrupulous; and so have his best friends pourtrayed it. And this onely action (high notwithstanding and very worthy admiration) I finde or deeme somewhat sharpe; so as I would nor wish, nor desire the imitation thereof in me, according to the forme it was in him. *Scipio Æmilianus* alone (would any charge him with as fierce, and nobly-minded an end, and with as deepe and universall knowledge of Sciences) might be placed in the other scale of the ballance against him. Oh what a displeasure hath swift-gliding Time done me, even in the nick, to deprive our eyes of the chiefest paire of lives, directly the noblest that ever were in *Plutarke*, of these two truly worthy personages: by the universall consent of the world, the one chiefe of Græcians, the other principall of Romanes. What a matter, what a workeman! For a man that was no Saint, but as we say, a gallant-honest man, of civil maners and common customes; of a temperate haughtinesse; the richest life I know (as the vulgar saying is) to have lived amongst the living, and fraughted with the richest qualities, and most to be desired parts (all things impartially considered) in my humour, is that of *Alcibiades*. But touching *Epaminondas*, for a patterne of excessive goodnes, I wil here insert certaine of his opinions. The sweetest contentment he

CHAPTER  
XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVI

Of the  
worthiest  
and most  
excellent  
men

had in all his life, he witnesseth to have beene, the pleasure he gave his father and mother, of his victory upon *Leuctra*: he staketh much in preferring their pleasure, before his content, so just and full of so glorious an action. *Hee thought it unlawfull, yea were it to recover the libertie of his countrey, for any one to kill a man, except he knew a just cause.* And therefore was he so backward in the enterprise of *Pelopidas* his companion, for the deliverance of *Thebes*. He was also of opinion, that in a battell a man should avoid to encounter his friend, being on the contrary part; and if he met him, to spare him. And his humanitie or gentlenes, even towards his very enemies, having made him to be suspected of the *Bœotians*, forsomuch as after he had miraculously forced the *Lacedemonians* to open him a passage, which at the entrance of *Morea* neere *Corinth*, they had undertaken to make-good, he was contented, without further pursuing them in furie, to have marched over their bellies; was the cause he was deposed of his office as Captaine Generall. Most honourable for such a cause; and for the shame it was to them, soone after to be forced by necessitie to advance him to his first place: and to acknowledge how their glorie, and confesse that their safetie did onely depend on him: victory following him as his shadow, whither soever he went: and as the prosperity of his countrie was borne by and with him, so it died with and by him.



## THE SECOND BOOKE

### THE THIRTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER

*Of the resemblance betweene children and fathers*



HIS hudling up of so much trash, or packing of so many severall pieces, is done so strangely, as I never lay hands on it, but when an over lazie idlenesse urgeth me: and no where, but in mine owne house. So have it beene compact at sundry pauses, and contrived at severall intervalls, as occasions have sometime for many months together, here and there in other places, detained me. Besides, I never correct my first imaginations by the second, it may happen, I now and then alter some word, rather to diversifie, then take any thing away. My purpose is, to represent the progresse of my humours, that every part be seene or member distinguished, as it was produced. I would to God I had begunne sooner, and knew the tracke of my changes, and course of my variations. A boy whom I employed to write for me, supposed he had gotten a rich bootie, when he stole some parts, which he best liked. But one thing comforts me that he shall gaine no more, then I lost by them. I am growne elder by seaven or eight yeares since I beganne them; nor hath it beene without some new purchase. I have by the liberality of yeares acquainted my selfe with the stone-chollike. Their commerce and long conversation, is not easily past-over without some such-like fruite. I would be glad, that of many other presents, they have ever in store, to bestow upon such as waite upon them long, they had made choise of <sup>that</sup> had beene more acceptable un<sup>der</sup> <sup>could</sup> never possesse me with <sup>my</sup>

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

infancy, I hated more. Of all accidents incident to age, it was that I feared most. My selfe have many times thought, I went on too farre, and that to hold out so long a journey, I must of necessitie, in the end, stumble upon some such unpleasing chance. I perceived plainely, and protested sufficiently, it was high time to depart, and that according to the rule of skillfull chirurgions, who when they must cut off some member, life must be seared to the quicke, and cut to the sound flesh. *That nature is wont to make him pay intolerable usurie, who doth not yeeld or pay the same in due time.* I was so farre from being readie to make lawfull tender of it, that in eighteene months, or thereabouts, I have continued in so yrkesome and unpleasing plight, I have already learn'd to apply my selfe unto it; and am now entring into covenant with this chollicall kinde of life; for therein I finde matter, wherewith to comfort me, and to hope better. *So much are men enured in their miserable estate, that no condition is so poore, but they will accept; so they may continue in the same.* Heare *Mæcenas*.

*Debilem facito manu,  
Debilem pede, coxa,  
Lubricos quate dentes,*

*Vita dum superest, bene est.*—SEN. *Epist.* 101 f.

Make me be weake of hand,  
Scarce on my legges to stand,  
Shake my loose teeth with paine,  
'Tis well so life remaine.

And *Tamburlane* cloked the fantasticall cruelty, he exercised upon Lazars or Leprousmen, with a foolish kinde of humanitie, putting all he could finde or heare-of, to death, (as he said,) to ridde them from so painefull and miserable a life, as they lived. For, there was none so wretched amongst them, that would



## THE SECOND BOOKE

not rather have beene three times a Leper, than not to be at all. And *Antisthenes* the Stoick, being very sicke, and crying out: *Oh who shall deliver me from my tormenting evils?* *Diogenes*, who was come to visite him, foorthwith presenting him a knife; *Mary*, this, said he, and that very speedily, if thou please: I meane not of my life, replyed hee, but of my sicknesse. The sufferances which simply touch us in minde, doe much lesse afflict me, then most men: Partly by judgement; For the World deemeth diverse things horrible, or avoydable with the losse of life, which to me are in a maner indifferent: Partly, by a stupid and insensible complexion, I have in accidents, that hit me not point-blanke: Which complexion I esteeme one of the better partes of my naturall condition. But the truely-essentiall and corporall sufferances, those I taste very sensibly: Yet is it, having other times fore-apprehended them with a delicate and weake sight, and by the enjoying of this long health and happy rest, which God hath lent me, the better part of my age, somewhat empaiied: I had by imagination conceived them so intolerable, that in good truth, I was more afraide, than since I have found hurt in them: Whereupon, I dayly augment this opinion: That most of our soules faculties (as we employ them) doe more trouble than stead the quiet repose of life. I am continually grapling with the worst of all diseases, the most grievous, the most mortall, the most remedillesse and the most violent. I have alreadie had triall of five or sixe long and painefull fittes of it. Neverthelesse, eyther I flatter my selfe, or in this plight there is yet something, that would faine keep life and soule together, namely in him, whose minde is free from feare of death, and from the threats, conclusions and consequences, which physicke is ever buzzing into our heads. But the effect of paine it

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

selfe, hath not so sharpe a smarting, or so pricking a sharpenesse, that a settled man should enter into rage or fall into dispaire. This commoditie at least I have by the chollicke, that what I could never bring to passe in my selfe, which was, altogether to reconcile, and throughly to acquaint my selfe with death, shee shall atchieve, she shall accomplish: for by how much more shee shall importune and urge me, by so much lesse shall death bee fearefull unto mee. I had already gotten, not to be beholding to life, but onely in regard of life, and for lives sake: She shall also untie this intelligence, and loose this combination. And God graunt, if in the end her sharpenesse shall happen to surmount my strength, shee cast me not into the other extremitie, no lesse vicious, no lesse bad, that is, to love and desire, to die.

*Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes.*

—MART. X. *Epig.* xlvii. ult.

Nor feare thy latest doome,  
Nor wish it ere it come.

They are two passions to be feared, but one hath her remedy neerer than the other. Otherwise, I have ever found that precept ceremonious, which so precisely appoints a man to set a good countenance, a settled resolution, and disdainefull carriage, upon the sufferance of evils. Why doth Philosophy, which onely respecteth liveliness and regardeth effects, ammuze it selfe about these externall apparances? Let her leave this care to Mimikes, to Histrions, and to Rhetoricke Masters, who make so great accompt of our gestures. Let her hardly remit this vocall lithernes unto evill, if it be neither cordiall, nor stomacall. And let her lend her voluntary plaints to the kinde of sighes, sobs, palpatations, and palnesse, which nature hath exempted from our puissance. Alwayes provided, the courage be without

## THE SECOND BOOKE

feare, and words sans dispaire; let her be so contented. *What matter is it if wee bend our armes, so wee writhe not our thoughts?* She frameth us for our selves, not for others: to be, not to seeme. Let her applie her selfe to governe our understanding, which she hath undertaken to instruct. Let her in the pangs or fits of the chollike, still maintaine the soule capable to acknowledge her selfe and follow her accustomed course, resisting sorrow and enduring griefe, and not shamefully to prostrate her selfe at his feete: Mooved and chafed with the combate, not basely suppressed nor faintly overthrowne: Capable of entertainment and other occupations, unto a certaine limit. In so extreme accidents, it is cruelty, to require so composed a warde at our hands. *If wee have a good game, it skills not, though wee have an ill countenance.* If the body be any whit eased by complaining, let him doe it: If stirring or agitation please him, let him turne, rowle and tosse himselfe as long as he list: If with raising his voyce, or sending it forth with more violence, he think his griefe any thing alayed or vented (as some Physitians affirme it somewhat easeth women great with childe, and is a meane of easie or speedy delivery) feare he not to do it; or if he may but entertaine his torment, let him mainly cry out. Let us not commaund our voyce to depart; but if she will, let us not hinder it. *Epicurus* doth not only pardon his wise-man to crie out, when he is grieved or vexed, but perswadeth him to it. *Pugiles etiam quum feriunt, in jactandis caestibus ingemiscunt, quia profundenda voce omne corpus intenditur, venitque plaga vehementior* (Cic. Tusc. Qu. ii.). Men when they fight with sand-bags or such heavy Weapons, in fetching their blow and driving it, will give a groane withall, because by stretching their voyce all their body is also strayed, and the stroke commeth with more

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

*vehemence.* We are vexed and troubled enough with the evill, without troubling and vexing our selves with these superfluous rules. This I say to excuse those, which are ordinarily seene to rage in the fits, and storme in the assaults of this sicknesse: for, as for me, I have hitherto past it over with somewhat a better countenance, and am content to groane without braying and exclaiming. And yet I trouble not my selfe, to maintaine this exterior decencie; for, I make small reckoning of such an advantage; In that I lend my sicknesse what it requireth: But either my paine is not so excessive, or I beare it with more constancy than the vulgar sorte. Indeede I must confesse, when the sharpe fits or throwes assaile me, I complaine, and vexe my selfe, but yet I never fall into despaire, as that fellow:

*Ejulatu, questu, gemitu, fremitibus  
Resonando multum flebiles voces refert.*

—CIC. *ibid.*

With howling, growning and complant of fates,  
Most lamentable cries he imitates.

I feele my selfe in the greatest heate of my sicknesse; and I ever found my selfe capable and in tune, to speake, to thinke and to answer, as soundly as at any other time, but not so constantly, because my paine doth much trouble and distract me. When I am thought to bee at the lowest, and that such as are about me spare me, I often make a triall of my forces, and propose them such discourses as are furthest from my state. There is nothing impossible for mee, and me thinkes I can doe all things upon a sodaine fitte, so it continue not long. Oh why have not I the gift of that dreamer, mentioned by *Cicero*, who dreaming that hee was closely embracing a yong wench; found himselfe ridde of the stone



## THE SECOND BOOKE

in his sheetes! Mine doe strangely dis-wench me. In the intermission or respites of this outrageous paine, when as my Ureters (through which the Urine passeth from the reines to the bladder) languish without gnawing me, I sodainely returne into my ordinary forme: forsomuch as my mind taketh no other allarume, but the sensible and corporall. All which I certainly owe unto the care I have had to prepare my selfe by reason and discourse of such accidents:

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

—*laborum*

*Nulla mihi nova nunc facies inopinaque surgit,  
Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi.*

—VIRG. *Æn.* vi. 103.

No new or unexpected forme is cast,  
Of travels in my brest: all I forecast,  
In my minde with my selfe I all forepast.

I am handled somewhat roughly for a Prentise, and with a violent and rude change; being at one instant false from a very pleasing, calme, and most happy condition of life, unto the most dolorous, yrkesome and painefull, that can possibly be imagined: For, besides that in it selfe it is a disease greatly to be feared, its beginnings or approaches are in mee sharper or more difficult, than it is wont to trouble others withall. The pangs and fittes thereof doe so often assaile mee, that in a manner I have no more feeling of perfect health. Notwithstanding I hitherto keepe my spirit so seated, as if I can but joyne constancy unto it, I finde my selfe to be in a much better state of life, than a thousand others, who have neither ague nor other infirmitie, but such as for want of discourse they give themselves. There is a certaine fashion of subtile humilitie, which proceedeth of presumption: As this: That in many things we acknowledge our ignorance, and are so courteous to avowe, that in Natures workes, there

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

are some qualities and conditions, which to us are imperceptible, and whereof our sufficiencie cannot discover the meanes, nor finde out the causes. By this honest and conscientious declaration, we hope to gaine, that we shall also be beleevd in those, we shall say to understand. Wee neede not goe to cull out miracles, and chuse strange difficulties; me seemeth, that amongst those things we ordinarily see, there are such incomprehensible rarities, as they exceed all difficulty of miracles. What monster is it, that this teare or drop of seed, wherof we are ingendred brings with it; and in it the impressions, not only of the corporall forme, but even of the very thoughts and inclinations of our fathers? Where doth this droppe of water containe or lodge this infinite number of formes? And how beare they these resemblances, of so rash, and unruly a progresse, that the childe childe shall be answerable to his grandfather, and the nephew to his uncle? In the family of *Lepidus* the Roman, there have beene three, not successively, but some between, that were borne with one same eye covered with a cartilage or gristle. There was a race in *Thebes*, which from their mothers wombe, bare the forme of a burre, or yron of a launce; and such as had it not, were judged as mis-begotten and deemed unlawfull. *Aristotle* reporteth of a certaine Nation, with whom all women were common, where children were allotted their fathers, only by their resemblances. It may be supposed, that I am indebted to my father for this stonie quality; for he died exceedingly tormented with a great stone in his bladder. He never felt himself troubled with the disease, but at the age of sixtie seaven yeares, before which time he had never felt any likelihood, or motion of it, nor in his reines, nor in his sides, nor elsewhere: and untill then had lived in very pros-



## THE SECOND BOOKE

perous health, and little subject to infirmities, and continued seven yeares and more with that disease training a very dolorous lives-end. I was borne five and twenty yeares before his sicknes, and during the course of his healthy state his third child. Where was al this while the propension or inclination to this defect, hatched? And when he was so farre from such a disease, that light part of his substance wherewith he composed me, how could it for her part, beare so great an impression of it? And how so closely covered, that fortie five yeares after, I have begunne to have a feeling of it? And hitherto alone, among so many brethren and sisters, and all of one mother. He that shal resolve me of this progresse, I will believe him as many other miracles as he shall please to tell mee: alwayes provided (as commonly they doe) hee goe not about to pay me, with a doctrine much more difficult and fantastical, then is the thing it selfe (let Physitians somewhat excuse my libertie:) for by the same infusion and fatall insinuation, I have received the hate and contempt of their doctrine. The Antipathie, which is betweene me and their arte, is to me hereditarie. My father lived three score and fourteene yeares: My grandfather three score and nine; my great grandfather very neere foure-score, and never tasted or tooke any kinde of Physicke. And whatsoever was not in ordinary use amongst them, was deemed a drug. *Physicke is grounded upon experience and examples.* So is mine opinion. Is not this a manifest kinde of experience and very advantageous? I know not whether in all their registers, they are able to finde me three more, borne, bred, brought up, and deceased, under one rooffe, in one same chimnie, that by their owne direction and regiment have lived so long. Wherein they must needs grant me, that if it be not reason, at least it is Fortune that is on my

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

side. Whereas among Physitions fortune is of more consequence, then reason. Low-brought, and weake as I am now, let them not take me at an advantage, nor let them not threaten me: for that were insulting arrogance. And to say truth, I have by my familiar examples gained enough upon them although they would take hold and stay there. Humane things have not so much constancie: It is now two hundred yeares; wanting but eighteene, that this Essay continueth with us: For, the first was borne in the yeare of our Lord one thousand four hundred and two. Some reason there is why this experience should now beginne to faile us. Let them not upbraide me with those infirmities, which now have seazed upon me: Is it not sufficient to have lived seaven and fortie yeares in good and perfect health for my part? Suppose it be the end of my carriere, yet it is of the longest. Mine ancestors by some secret instinct and naturall inclination have ever loathed al maner of Physicke; for the very sight of drugs bred a kinde of horror in my father. The Lord of *Gaviac* mine unckle by the fathers side, a man of the church, sickish even from his birth, and who notwithstanding made his weake life to hold untill sixtie seaven yeares, falling once into a dangerous and vehement continuall feaver, it was by the physitions concluded, that unlesse he would aide himselfe (for they often terme that aide, which indeede is impeachment) he was but a dead man. The good soule, afrighted as he was, at that horrible sentence, answered thus, why then I am a dead man: But shortly after God made their prognostications to proove vaine. The Lord of *Bussaguet* last of the brethren (for they were foure) and by much the last, he alone submitted himselfe to that arte, as I imagine by reason of the frequence he had in other Sciences; for he was a Counsellor in the Court of Parliament, which

## THE SECOND BOOKE

prospered so ill with him, that though he were in shew of a very strong complexion, he died long before the others, except one, the Lord of Saint *Michael*. It may well be, I have received of them that natural dyspathie unto physicke. Yet if there had been no other consideration but this, I would have endeavoured to force it. For, all these conditions, which without reason are borne in us, are vicious. It is a kinde of maladie a man must fight withall. It may be I had such a propension, but I have settled and strengthened the same by discourses, which in me have confirmed the opinion I have of it. For, I have also the consideration to refuse Physicke by reason of the sharpnesse of its taste. It would not easily agree with my humour, who thinke *health worthy to be purchased, with the price of all cauteries and incisions, how painefull soever.* And following *Epicurus*, mee seemeth that *all maner of voluptuousnesse should be avoided, if greater griefes followe them:* And griefes to be sought after, that have greater voluptuousnesse ensuing them. Health is a very precious jewell, and the onely thing, that in pursuite of it deserveth, a man should not onely employ, time, labour, sweate and goods, but also life to get it; forasmuch as without it, life becommeth injurious unto us. Voluptuousnes, Science and vertue, without it, tarnish and vanish away. And to the most constant and exact discourses, that philosophy will imprint in our minds to the contrary, wee need not oppose any thing against it but the image of *Plato*, being visited with the falling sicknesse, or an Apoplexie; and in this presupposition challenge him to call the richest faculties of his minde to helpe him.

All meanes that may bring us unto health, cannot be esteemed of [mee] either sharpe or deare. But I have some other apparances, which strangely make me to distrust al this ware. I doe not say but there

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

# MONTA

## CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

side. Whereas a  
consequence, then  
as I am now, let  
nor let them not  
ing arrogance.  
familiar examples  
they would take ho  
have not so much e  
yeares; wanting bu  
tinueth with us :  
yeare of our Lord  
two. Some reason  
should now beginne  
braide me with the  
seazed upon me : I  
seaven and fortie ye  
for my part ? Supp  
yet it is of the long  
secret instinct and  
loathed al maner of I  
drugs bred a kinde of I  
of *Gaviac* mine unckl  
the church, sickish eve  
withstanding made his  
seaven yeares, falling or  
ment continuall feaver  
concluded, that unlesse  
they often terme that aic  
ment) he was but a de  
afrighted as he was, at tha  
thus, why then I am a de  
God made their prognos  
The Lord of *Bussaguet* las  
were foure) and by much  
mitted himselfe to that ari  
of the frequence he had in  
was a Counsellor in the Co.



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

the Arcadians (saith *Plinie*) cure all maladies with Cowes milke. And the Lybians (saith *Herodotus*) doe generally enjoy a perfect health, by observing this custome, which is, so soone as their children are about foure yeeres old, to cautherize and seare the veines of their head and temples, whereby they cut off the way to all rumes and defluxions. And the countrie-people where I dwell, use nothing against all diseases, but some of the strongest wine they can get, with store of saffron and spice in it; and all with one like fortune. And to say true, of all this diversitie of rules and confusion of prescriptions, what other end or effect workes it, but to evacuate the belly? which a thousand home-simples will doe as well. And I know not whether it be as profitable (as they say) and whether our nature require the [residence] of her excrements, untill a certaine measure, as wine doth his lees for his preservation. You see often men very healthy by some strange accidents, to fall into violent vomites, and fluxies, and voyd great store of excrements, without any praecedent need, or succeeding benefite: yea with some empairing and prejudice. I learn't of *Plato* not long since, that of three motions, which belong to us, the last and worst, is that of purgations, and that no man, except he be a foole, ought to undertake it; unlesse it be in great extremity. The evill is troubled and stirred up by contrary oppositions. It is the forme of life, that gently must diminish, consume and bring it to an end. Since the violent twinges of the drug and maladie are ever to our losse: since the quarrell is cleared in us, and the drug a trustlesse helpe; by it's own nature an enemy to our health, and but by trouble hath no accesse in our state: Let's give them leave to go on. *That order which provideth for Fleas and Moles, doth also provide for men, who have the same patience to suffer*

## THE SECOND BOOKE

*themselves to be governed, that Fleas and Moles have.* We may fairely cry bo-bo-boe; it may well make us hoarse, but it will nothing aduance it. It is a proud and impetuous order. Our feare and our dispaire, in lieu of enviting the same unto it, doth distaste and delay it out of our helpe: he oweth his course to evill as well as to sicknesse. To suffer himselfe to be corrupted in favour of one, to the prejudice of the others rights, he will not doe it, so should they fall into disorder. Let us goe on in the name of God; let us follow; He leadeth on such as follow him: those that follow him not, he haleth on, both with their rage and physieke together. Cause a purgation to be prepared for your braine; it will bee better employed unto it, then to your stomacke. A Lacedemonian being asked, what had made him live so long in health, answered, *The ignorance of physieke.* And Adrian the Emperour, as he was dying, ceased not to crie out, that *the number of Physitions had killed him.* A bad wrestler became a Physition. Courage, said Diogenes to him, *thou hast reason to doe so, for now shalt thou helpe to put them into the ground, who have heeretofore ayded to lay thee on it.* But according to Nicocles, they have this happe, *That the Sunne doth manifest their successe, and the earth doth cover their fault.* And besides, they have a very advantageous fashion among themselves, to make use of all manner of events; for, whatsoever either Fortune or Nature, or any other strange cause (wherof the number is infinite) produceth in us, or good or healthfull, it is the priviledge of Physieke to ascribe it unto herselfe. All the fortunate successes that come to the patient, which is under their government, it is from nature he hath them. The occasions that have cured me, and which heale a thousand others, who never send or call for Physitions to helpe them, they usurpe them in their

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the resemblance betweene children and fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

subjects. And touching ill accidents, either they utterly disavow them, in imputing the blame of them to the patient, by some vaine reasons, whereof they never misse to finde a great number; as he lay with his armes out of the bed, he hath heard the noyse of a coach:

—*rhedarum transitus arcto*  
*Vicorum inflexu.*—Juv. *Sat.* iii. 236.

Coaches could hardly passe,  
The lane so crooked was.

His Window was left open all night: Hee hath laine upon the left side, or troubled his head with some heavie thought. In some, a word, a dreame, or a looke, is of them deemed a sufficient excuse, to free themselves from all imputation: Or if they please, they will also make use of this emparing, and thereby make up their businesse, and as a meane which can never faile them, when by their applications the disease is growne desperate, to pay us with the assurance, that if their remedies had not beene, it would have beene much worse. He, whom but from a cold they have brought to a quotidian Ague, without them should have had a continuall feaver. *They must needes thrive in their businesse, since all ills redownd to their profit.* Truely they have reason to require of the pacient an application of favourable confidence in them: which must necessarily be in good earnest, and yeelding to apply it self unto imaginations, over-hardly to be believed. *Plato* said very well and to the purpose, that *freely to lie belonged onely to Physitions*, since our health dependeth on their vanitie and falsehood of promises. *Aesope* an author of exceeding rare excellence, and whose graces few discover, is very pleasant in representing this kinde of tyrannicall authority unto us, which they usurpe upon poore soules, weakned by sickenes,



## THE SECOND BOOKE

and overwhelmed through feare: for he reporteth, how a sicke man being demaunded by his Physition, what operation he felt by the Physicke he had given him. I have sweate much, answered he; that is good, replied the Physition. Another time he asked him againe how he had done since: I have had a great cold and quivered much, said he: That is very well, quoth the Physition againe. The third time he demaunded of him, how he felt himselfe: he answered, I swell and puffe up as it were with the dropsie: That's not amisse, said the physitian. A familiar friend of his comming afterward to visite him, and to know how hee did? Verily (said he) my friend I die with being too too well. There was a more equall Law in *Ægypt*, by which for the first three dayes the Physition tooke the patient in hand, upon the patients perill and fortune; but the three dayes expired, it was at his owne. For, *What reason is there, that Æsculapius their patrone must have beene stricken with Thunder, forsomuch as he recovered Hippolitus from death to life?*

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the resemblance betweene children and fathers

*Nam pater omnipotens aliquem indignatus ab umbris,  
Mortalem infernis, ad lumina surgere vitæ  
Ipse repertorem medicinæ talis, et artis  
Fulmine Phœbigenam stygiæ detrusit ad undas.*

—Vino. *Æn.* vii. 770.

*Jove* scorning that from shades infernall night,  
A mortall man should rise to lifes new light,  
*Apolloes* sonne to hell the thunder threw,  
Who such an arte found out, such med'cine knew,

*and his followers must be absolved, that send so many soules from life to death? A physition boasted unto Nicocles, that his Arte was of exceeding great authority, It is true (quoth Nicocles) for, it may kill so many people without feare of punishment by Law. As for the rest, had I beene of their counsell, I would surely have made my discipline more sacred*

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

and mysterious. They had begunne very well, but the end hath not answered the beginning. It was a good ground, to have made Gods and Dæmons Authors of their Science, to have assumed a peculiar language and writing to themselves. Howbeit philosophy supposeth it to be folly to perswade a man to his profit, by wayes not understood: *Ut si quis medicus imperet utumat: As if a Physition should bid a man take.*

*Terrigenam, herbigradam, domiportam, sanguine cassam.*

—Cic. *Dein.* ii.

One earth-borne, goe-by-grasse, house-bearing, slimie, bloodlesse,

It was a good rule in their arte, and which accompanieth all fanaticall, vaine, and supernaturall artes, that *the patients believe must by good hope and assurance preoccupate their effect and operation.* Which rule they hold so farre forth, that the most ignorant and bungling horse-leach is fitter for a man that hath confidence in him, than the skilfullest and learnedst physition. The very choyce of most of their Drugges, is somewhat mysterious and divine. *The left foote of a Tortoyze; The stale of a Lizard; The dongue of an Elephant; The liver of a Mole, Blood drawne from under the right wing of a white Pigeon;* And for us who are troubled with the stone-cholike (so disdainfully abuse they our misery) *Some Rattes pounded to small powder;* and such other foolish trash, which rather seeme to be magike-spells or charmes, than effects of any solide science. I omit to speake of *The odde number of their pilles; The destination of certaine dayes and feastes of the yeare; The distinction of houres to gather the simples of their ingredients; And the same reubarbative and severely-grave looke of theirs, and of their port and countenance;* Which *Plinie* himselfe mocketh at. But, as I was about to say, they have failed, for-



## 23 THE SECOND BOOKE

somuch as they have not added this to their faire  
 beginning, to make their assemblies more religious,  
 and their consultations more secret. No profane  
 man should have accesse unto them, no more than  
 to the secret ceremonies of *Esculapius*. By which  
 meanes it commeth to passe, that their irresolution,  
 the weakenesse of their arguments, divinations and  
 grounds, the sharpenesse of their contestations full  
 of hatred, of jealousie and particular considerations,  
 being apparant to all men; a man must needes be  
 starke blinde, if he who falleth into their hands, see not  
 himselfe greatly endangered. *Who ever saw Physition*  
*use his fellowes receipt, without diminishing or adding*  
*somechat unto it?* Whereby they greatly betraie their  
 Arte; And make us perceiue, they rather respect their  
 reputation, and consequently their profit, than the  
 well-fare or interests of their patients. He is the  
 wisest amongst their Doctors, who hath long since  
 prescribed them that one alone should meddle to  
 cure a sicke man; for, if it prosper not with him,  
 and he do no good, the reproch will not be great  
 to the Arte of physicke, through the fault of one  
 man alone; and on the other side, if it thrive well  
 with him, the Glorie shal be the greater. Whereas if  
 they be many, every hand-while they discover their  
 mysterie, because *They oftner happen to doe ill than*  
*well.* They should have beene content with the  
 perpetuall dis-agreeing which is ever found in the  
 opinions of the principall Masters and chiefe Authors  
 of their Science, knowne but by such as are conver-  
 sant in Booke, without making apparent shew of the  
 controversies, and inconstancies of their judgement,  
 which they foster and continue amongst themselves.  
 Will wee have an example of the ancient debate of  
 Physicke? *Hierophilus* placeth the originall cause of  
 sicknesse in the humours: *Erastistratus*, in the bl  
 of the Arteries: *Asclepiades*, in the invisible A<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
 resemblance  
 betweene  
 children and  
 fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

that passe into our pores: *Alcmeon*, in the abundance or [defect] of corporall forces: *Diocles*, in the inequality of the bodies elements, and in the quality of the aire, wee breathe: *Strato*, in the abundance, cruditie and corruption of the nourishment wee take: *Hipocrates* doth place it in the spirits. There is a friend of theirs, whom they know better than I, who to this purpose crieth out; that the most important science in use amongst us (as that which hath charge of our health and preservation) is byll hap, the most uncertaine, the most confused, and most agitated with infinite changes. There is no great danger to mistake the height of the Sunne, or misse-reckon the fraction of some Astronomical supputation; but herein, whereon our being and chiefe free-hold doth wholly depend, it is no wisdom to abandon our selves to the mercy of the agitation of so manifold contrary windes. Before the Peloponnesian war, there was no great newes of this science. *Hipocrates* brought it into credite. Whatsoever he established, *Chrysippus* overthrew. Afterward *Erasistratus* Grand-Childe to *Aristotle*, re-enverst what ever *Chrysippus* had written of it. After these, start up the Emperikes, who concerning the managing of this Arte, tooke a new course, altogether different from those ancient fathers. And when their credit began to growe stale; *Hirophilus* brought another kinde of physicke into use, which *Asclepiades* when his turne came, impugned, and in the end subverted. Then came the opinions of *Themison* to bee in great authority, then those of *Musa*, and afterward those of *Vectius Valens*, a famous Physition, by reason of the acquaintance he had with *Messalina*. During the time of *Nero*, the soveraigntie of phisick fel to the hands of *Thessalus*, who abolished and condemned whatsoever had been held of it before his time. This mans Doctrine was afterward wholly overthrowne

## THE SECOND BOOKE

by *Crinas of Marseille*, who a new revived and framed, that all men should direct and rule medicinal operations to the *Ephemerides* and motions of the starres, to eate, to drinke, to sleepe at what houre it should please *Luna* and *Mercurie*. His authority was soone after supplanted by *Charinus* a Physition of the same towne of *Marseilles*, who not onely impugned ancient physicke, but also the use of warme and publike bathes, which had beene accustomed to many ages before. Hee caused men to bee bathed in cold Water; yea, were it in the deepe of winter he plunged and dived sicke men into the running streame of Rivers. Untill *Plinies* time no Romane had ever dained to exercise the arte of physicke, but was ever used by strangers and Græcians, as at this daie it is used in *France* by Latinizers. For, as a famous physition saith, we doe not easily admit and allow that physicke, which wee understand, nor those Drugs we gather our selves. If those nations from whom wee have the Wood *Guaiacum*, the *Salsapareille*, and the Wood *Desquine*, have any physition amongst them, how much thinke we by the same commendation of the strangenesse, rarenesse and dearth, they will rejoyce at our coleworts and parsly? For, who dareth contemne things sought and fetcht so farre-off with the hazard of so long and dangerous a peregrination? since these auncient mutations of physicke, there have beene infinite others, that have continued unto our dayes, and most often entire and universall mutations; as are those which *Paracelsus*, *Fioravanti* and *Argenterius* have produced: for (as it is told me) they do not only change a receipt, but also the whole contexture and policie of physickes whole body, accusing such as hitherto have made profession thereof, of ignorance and cousinage. Now I leave to your imagination, in what plight the

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

poore patient findeth himselfe. If we could but be assured, when they mistake themselves, their physick would do us no harme, although not profit us. *It were a reasonable composition, for a man to hazard himselfe to get some good, so he endangered not himselfe to lose by it.* *Æsop* reporteth this storie; that one who had bought a Moore-slave, supposing his blacke hew had come unto him by some strange accident, or ill usage of his former Master, with great diligence caused him to be medicined with divers bathes and sundry potions: It fortun'd the Moore did no whit mend or change his swarthy complexion, but lost his former health. *How often commeth it to passe, and how many times see we physitions charge one another with their patients death.* I remember a popular sicknesse, which some yeares since, greatly troubled the townes about mee, very mortall and dangerous; the rage whereof being over-past, which had carried away an infinite number of persons: One of the most famous physitions in all the country, published a booke, concerning that disease wherein he adviseth himselfe, that they had done amisse to use phlebotomy, and confesseth, it had beene one of the principall causes of so great an inconvenience. Moreover, their authors hold, that *there is no kinde of Physicke, but hath some hurtfull part in it.* And if those that fit our turne, doe in some sort harme us; what must those doe, which are given us to no purpose, and out of season? As for me, if nothing else belonged thereunto, I deeme it a matter very dangerous, and of great prejudice for him who loathes the taste, or abhorres the smell of a potion, to swallow it at so inconvenient houres, and so much against his heart. And I thinke it much distempereth a sicke man, namely in a season he hath so much neede of rest. Besides, consider but the occasions, on which they ordinarily



## THE SECOND BOOKE

ground the cause of our sicknesses; they are so light and delicate, as thence I argue, *That a very small error in compounding of their Drugges, may occasion us much detriment.* Now if the mistaking in a Physition be dangerous, it is very ill for us: for it is hard if he fall not often into it. *He hath neede of many parts, divers considerations and severall circumstances to proportion his desseigne justly. He ought to know the sicke mans complexion, his temper, his humours, his inclinations, his actions, his thoughts and his imaginations. He must be assured of externall circumstances; of the nature of the place; the condition of the aire; the quality of the weather; the situation of the planets, and their influences. In sickness, he ought to be acquainted with the causes, with the signes, with the affections and criticall daies: In drugges he should understand their weight, their vertue and their operation, the country, the figure, the age, the dispensation.* In all these parts, he must know how to proportion and referre them one unto another; thereby to beget a perfect Symmetric or due proportion of each part: wherein if he misse never so little, or if amongst so many wheelles and several motions, the least be out of tune or temper; it is enough to marre all.

God knowes how hard the knowledge of most of these parts is: As for example, how shall he finde out the proper signe of the disease, every malady being capable of an infinite number of signes: How many debates, doubts and controversies have they amongst themselves about the interpretations of Urine? Otherwise whence should that continuall alteration come we see amongst them, about the knowledge of the disease? How should we excuse this fault, wherein they fall so often, to take a Martin for a Fox? In those diseases I have had (so they admitted any difficulty)

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
between  
children and  
fathers

variety and weaknes of the reasons of this Art, it is more apparent then in any other Art. Aperitive things are good for a man thats troubled with the collike, because, that opening and dilating the passages, they addresse this slimy matter whereof the gravel and stone is ingendred, and so convey downeward whatsoever beginneth to harden and petrifie in the reines: Aperitive things are dangerous for a man thats troubled with the collick, because that opening and dilating the passages, they addresse towards the reines, the matter engendering gravell, which by reason of the propensions they have with it, easily seizing on the same, must by consequence stay great store of that which is convaied unto them. Moreover, if by chance it fortune to meet with a body, somewhat more grosse then it ought to be, to passe all those strait turnings, which to expel the same they must glide thorow; that body being moved by those soluble things, and cast in those strait chanel, and comming to stop them, it will doubtlesse hasten a certaine and most dolorous death. They have a like constancy about the counsels they give us, touching the regiment of our life. It is good to make water often; for by experience we see, that permitting the same idly to ly still, we give it leisure to discharge it selfe of her lees and excrements, which may serve to breed the stone in the bladder: It is good to make water but seldome, for the weighty dregs it drawes with it, are not easily caried away, except by violence: as by experience is seene in a torrent that runneth very swift, which sweepeth and clenseth the place through which he passeth, much more then doth a slow-gliding streame. Likewise it is good to have often copulation with women: for that openeth the passages, and convaieth the gravell away: It is also hurtfull; for it heateth, wearieth, and weakneth the reines. It is good for

## THE SECOND BOOKE

one to bathe himselfe in warme water; forsomuch as that looseth and moistneth the places where the gravel and stone lurketh: It is also bad; because this application of externall heat helpeth the reines to concoct, to harden and petrifie the matter disposed unto it. To such as are at the bathes, it is more healthfull to eat but little at night, that the water they are to drink the next morning, finding the stomacke empty, and without any obstacle, it may worke the greater operation; on the other side, it is better to eat but a little at dinner, lest a man might hinder the operation of the water, which is not yet perfect, and not to charge the stomacke so suddenly, after this other travell, and leave the office of digesting unto the night, which can better do it then the day: the body and spirit being then in continual motion and action. Loe heere how they in all their discourses juggle, dally, and trifle at our charge, and are never able to bring mee a proposition, but I can presently frame another to the contrary of like force and consequence. Let them then no longer raile against those who in any sicknes, suffer themselves gentily to be directed by their owne appetite, and by the counsell of nature; and who remit themselves to common fortune. I have by occasion of my travels seene almost all the famous Bathes of Christendome, and some yeeres since have begun to use them: For, in generall I deeme bathing to be very good and healthy, and I am perswaded, we incurre no small incommodities in our health, by having neglected and lost this custome, which in former times were generally observed very neere amongst all Nations, and is yet with divers at this time to wash their bodies every day: And I cannot imagine but that we are much the worse with keeping our bodies all over-crusted, and our pores stopt with grease and filth. And touching the drinking

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

of them, fortune hath first made it to agree very well with my taste: secondly it is naturall and simple; and though vaine, nothing dangerous: whereof this infinity of people of al sorts and complexions, and of all nations that come to them, doth warrant mee. And although I have as yet found no extraordinary good or wondrous effect in them, but rather having somewhat curiously examined the matter, I finde all the reports of such operations, which in such places are reported, and of many believed, to be false and fabulous. *So easily doth the world deceive it selfe, namely in things it desireth, or faine would have come to passe.* Yet have I seene but few or none at al, whom these waters have made worse; and no man can without malice denie, but that they stirre up a mans appetite, make easie digestion, and except a man goe to them overweake and faint (which I would have none doe) they will adde a kinde of new mirth unto him. They have not the power to raise men from desperate diseases. They may stay some light accident, or prevent the threats of some alteration. Whosoever goeth to them, and resolveth not to be merry, that so he may enjoy the pleasure of the good company resorts to them, and of the pleasant walks or exercises, which the beauty of those places, where bathes are commonly seated, doth affoord and delight men withall; he without doubt loseth the better part and most assured of their effect. And therefore have I hitherto chosen to stay my selfe and make use of those, where I found the pleasure of the scituation most delightsome, most conveniencie of lodging, of victuals and company, as are in *France* the bathes of *Banieres*; those of *Plombieres*, on the frontiers of *Germany* and *Lorraine*; those of *Baden* in *Switzerland*; those of *Luca* in *Tuscanie*; and especially those of *Della villa*; which I have used most often and at divers seasons of the yeare. Every nation

## THE SECOND BOOKE

hath some particular opinion concerning their use, and severall lawes and formes how to use them, and all different: And as I have found by experience the effect in a manner all one. In *Germanie* they never use to drinke of the waters: but bathe themselves for all diseases, and wil lie padling in them, almost from Sunne to Sunne. In *Italie* if they drinke nine dayes of the water, they wash themselves other thirtie dayes with it. And commonly they drinke it mixt with other drugges, thereby to helpe the operation. Here our Physicians appoint us when wee have drunke to walke upon it, that so wee may helpe to digest it: There, so soone as they have drunke, they make them lie a bed, untill they have voyded the same out againe, continually warming their stomack and feete with warme clothes. All the Germanes whilest they lie in the water, doe particularly use cupping glasses, and scarifications: And the Italians use their *Doccie*, which are certaine spowts running with warme waters, convayed from the bathes-spring in leaden pipes, where, for the space of a month, they let it spout upon their heads, upon their stomacke, or upon any other part of the bodie, according as neede requireth, one houre in the forenoone, and as long in the afternoone. There are infinit other differences of customes in every countrey: or to say better, there is almost no resemblances betweene one and other. See how this part of Physicke, by which alone I have suffered my selfe to be carried away, which though it be least artificiall, yet hath she the share of the confusion and uncertainty, seene in all other parts and every where of this arte. Poets may say what they list, and with more emphasis and grace: witnesse these two Epigrammes.

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

# MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

## CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

*Alcon hesterno signum Jovis attigit. Ille  
Quamvis marmoreus, vim patitur medici.  
Ecce hodie jussus transferri ex æde vetusta,  
Effertur, quamvis sit Deus atque lapis.*

—LUCIL. AUSON. *Epig.* lxxiii.

*Alcon* look't yester-day on carved *Jove*,  
*Jove*, though of Marble, feeles the leeches force,  
From his old Church to day made to remoove,  
Though God and Stone, hee's carried like a coarse.

And the other :

*Lotus nobiscum est hilaris, cenavit et idem,  
Inventus mane est mortuus Androgoras.  
Tam subitæ mortis causam Faustine requiris ?  
In somnis medicum viderat Hermocratem.*

—MART. VI. *Epig.* liii.

*Androgoras* in health bath'd over night with us,  
And merry supt, but in the morne starke dead was found.  
Of his so sudden death, the cause shall I discusse.  
*Hermocrates* the Leech he saw in sleepe unsound.

Upon which I will tell you two pretty stories.  
The Baron of *Caupene* in Chalosse and I, have both  
in common the right of the patronage of a benefice,  
which is of a very large precinct, situated at the feet  
of our Mountaines named *Lohontan*. It is with the  
inhabitants of that corner, as it is said to be with  
those of the valley of *Angrougne*. They leade a  
kind of peculiar life; their [fashion, their] attire,  
and their customes apart and severall. They were  
directed and governed by certaine particular policies  
and customes, received by tradition from Father  
to Child: Whereto, without other Lawes of  
Compulsion, except the reverence and awe of their  
custome and use, they awefully tie and bound them-  
selves. This petty state had from all antiquity con-  
tinued in so happy a condition, that no neighbouring  
severe judge had ever beene troubled to enquire of  
their life and affaires, nor was ever Atturney or Pety-  
fogging Lawyer called for, to give them advise or



## THE SECOND BOOKE

counsell; nor stranger sought unto to determine their quarrels or decide their contentions; neither were ever beggers seen among them. They alwaies avoyded commerce and shunned alliances with the other World, lest they should alter the purity of their orders and policy; untill such time (as they say) that one amongst them, in their fathers daies, having a minde puft up with a noble ambition, to bring his name and credit in reputation, devised to make one of his Children *Sir John Lackelatine*, or *Master Peter an Oake*: And having made him learne to write in some neighbour Towne not farre off, at last procured him to be a country Notary, or Petty-fogging Clark. This fellow having gotten some pelfe and become great, began to disdain their ancient customes, and put the pompe and statelines of our higher regions into their heads. It fortun'd that a chiefe Gossip of his had a Goate dishorned, whom he so importunately solicited to sue the Trespasser, and demand law and right at the Justicers hands, that dwelt thereabouts; And so never ceasing to sow sedition and breed suites amongst his neighbours, he never left till he had confounded and marred all. After this corruption or intrusion of law (they say) there ensued presently another mischiefe of worse consequence, by meanes of a Quacke-salver, or Empirike Physition that dwelt amongst them, who would needes be married to one of their daughters, and so endenizon and settle himselfe amongst them.

This gallant began first to teach and instruct them in the names of agewes, rheumes and impostumes; then the scituation of the heart, of the liver and other intraines: A Science untill then never known or heard of among them. And in stead of garlike, wherewith they had learned to expell, and were wont to cure all diseases, of what qualitie and how

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

dangerous soever they were, he induced and inured them, were it but for a cough or cold, to take strange compositions and potions: And thus beganne to trafficke not only their health, but also their deaths. They sweare, that even from that time, they have apparantly perceived, that the evening Sereine or night-calme bred the head-ach and blasted them; that to drinke being hot or in a sweat empaired their healths; that Autumne windes were more unwholesome and dangerous, then those of the spring-time: And that since his slibber-sawces, potions and physicke came first in use; they finde themselves molested and distempered with Legions of unaccustomed maladies and unknowne diseases; and plainly feele and sensibly perceive a generall weaknesse and declination in their antient vigor; and that their lives are nothing so long, as before they were. Loe here the first of my tales. The other is, that before I was troubled with the stone-chollicke and gravell in the bladder, hearing divers make especiall account of a hee-goates blood, as a heavenly *Manna* sent in these latter ages for the good and preservation of mans life: and hearing men of good understanding speake of it, as of an admirable and much-good-working drugge, and of an infallible operation: I, who have ever thought my selfe subject to all accidents, that may in any sort fall on man, being yet in perfect health, began to take pleasure to provide my selfe of this myracle, and forthwith gave order (according to the receipt) to have a Buck-goate gotten, and carefully fed in mine owne house. For the blood must be drawne from him in the hottest month of Summer, and he must onely be fed with soluble hearbes, and drinke nothing but White-wine. It was my fortune to come to mine owne house the very same day the Goate should be killed; where some of my people came in haste to tell me, that my

## THE SECOND BOOKE

Cooke found two or three great bowles in his paunch, which in his maw amongst his meat shocked one against another. I was so curious as I would needes have all his garbage brought before me; the thicke and large skinne whereof I caused to be opened, out of which came three great lumps or bodies, as light as any sponge, so framed as they seemed to be hollow, yet outwardly hard and very firme, bemotled with divers dead and wannish colours: The one perfectly as round as any bowle, the other two somewhat lesser, and not so round, yet seemed to grow towards it. I have found (after I had made diligent inquiry among such as were wont to open such beasts) that it was a seld-seene and unheard of accident. It is very likely they were such stones as ours be, and cozen-germanes to them; which if it be, it is but vaine for such as be troubled with the stone or gravell to hope to be cured, by meanes of a beasts blood, that was drawing neere unto death, and suffered the same disease. For, to aleadge the blood cannot participate of that contagion, and doth no whit therby alter his accustomed vertue, it may rather be inferred that nothing ingendereth in a body, but by consent and communication of all the parts. The whole masse doth worke, and the whole frame agitate altogether, although one part, according to the diversitie of operations, doth contribute more or lesse than another: whereby it manifestly appeareth, that in all parts of this bucke-goate, there was some grettie or petrificant qualitie. It was not so much for feare of any future chaunce, or in regard of my selfe, that I was so curious of this experiment; as in respect, that as well in mine owne house, as else-where in sundry other places, it commeth to passe, that many women do often gather and lay up in store, divers such kindes of slight druggs to help their neighbours, and other people with them, in time of necessitie; applying one same

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

remedie to an hundred severall diseases: yea many times such as they would be very loath to take themselves; with which they often have good lucke, and well thrives it with them. As for me I honour Physitions, not according to the common-receiv'd rule, for necessitie sake (for to this passage another of the Prophets may be alleaged who reprooved King Asa, because he had recourse unto Physitions) but rather for love I beare unto themselves; having seene some, and knowne diverse honest men amongst them, and worthy all love and esteeme. *It is not them I blame, but their Arte;* yet doe I not greatly condemne them for seeking to profit by our foolishnesse (for most men do so) and it is a thing common to all worldlings. *Diverse professions and many vocations, both more and lesse worthie than theirs, subsist and are groundd onely upon publike abuses and popular errorrs.* I send for them when I am sicke, if they may conveniently be found; and love to be entertained by them, rewarding them as other men doe. I give them authority to enjoyne me to keepe my selfe warme, if I love it better so than otherwise. They may chuse, be it either leekes or lettuce, what my broth shall be made withall, and appoint me either white or claret to drink: and so of other things else, indifferent to my taste, humour or custome. I know well it is nothing to them, forsomuch as *Sharpenesse and Strangenesse are accidents of physickes proper essence.* *Lycurgus* allowed and appoynted the sicke men of *Sparta* to drinke wine. Why did he so? Because being in health, they hated the use of it. Even as a Gentleman who dwelleth not farre from me, useth wine as a soveraigne remedie against agews, because being in perfect health, he hateth the taste thereof as death. How many of them see we to be of my humour? That is, to disdaine all Physicke for their owne behoofe, and live a kinde of formall

## THE SECOND BOOKE

free life, and altogether contrary to that, which they prescribe to others? And what is that, but a manifest abusing of our simplicitie? For, they hold their life as deare, and esteeme their health as pretious as wee do ours, and would apply their effects to their skill, if themselves knew not the uncertainty and falsehood of it. It is the feare of paine and death; the impatience of the disease and griefe: and indiscreet desire and headlong thirst of health, that so blindeth them, and us. It is meere faintnes that makes our conceit: and pusillanimitie forceth our credulitie, to be so yeelding and pliable. The greater part of whom doe notwithstanding not belceve so much, as they endure and suffer of others: For I heare them complaine, and speake of it no otherwise than we doe. Yet in the end are they resolved. What should I doe then? As if impatience were in it selfe a better remedie than patience. Is there any of them, that hath yeelded to this miserable subjection, that doth not likewise yeelde to all maner of impostures? or dooth not subject himselfe to the mercie of whomsoever hath the impudencie to promise him recoverie, and warrant him health?

The Babilonians were wont to carry their sicke people, into the open streetes: the common sort were there physitions: where all such as passed by were by humanitie and civilitie to enquire of their state and maladie, and according to their skill or experience, give them some sound advise and good counsell. We differ not greatly from them: There is no poore Woman so simple, whose mumbling and muttering, whose slibber-slabbers and drenches we doe not employ. And as for mee, were I to buy any medicine, I would rather spend my money in this kinde of Physicke, than in any other: because therein is no danger or hurt to be feared. What *Homer* and *Plato* said of the *Ægyptians*, that they were all Physitions,

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

shall he rest assured, but that either the evill was come to his utmost period, or that an effect of the hazard, caused the same health? Or the operation of some other thing, which that day he had either eaten, drunke or touched? or whether it were by the merite of his Grandmothers prayers? Besides, suppose this experiment to have beene perfect, how many times was it applied and begun a new; And how often was this long and tedious web of fortunes and encounters woven over againe, before a certaine rule might be concluded? And being concluded, by whom is it I pray you? *Amongst so many millions of men, you shall scarce meete with three or foure, that will duely observe, and carefully keepe a Register of their experiments;* shall it be your, or his happe, to light truely, or hit just with one of them three or foure? What if another man? Nay what if a hundred other men have had and made contrary experiments, and cleane opposite conclusions, and yet have sorted well? We should peradventure discerne some shew of light, if all the judgements and consultations of men were knowne unto us. But *That three Witnesses and three Doctors shall sway all mankind, there is no reason.* It were requisite, humane nature had appointed and made speciall choise of them, and that by expresse procuration and letter of atturny they were by her declared our Judges and deputed our Atturnies.



# THE SECOND BOOKE

TO MY LADY OF DURAS



MADAME, the last time it pleased you to come and visite me, you found me upon this point. And because it may be, these toyces of mine may happily come to your hands: I would have them witnesse, their author reputeth himselfe highly honoured, for the favours it shall please you to shew them. Wherein you shall discern the very same demeanor and selfe-countenance, you have seene in his conversation. And could I have assumed unto my selfe any other fashion, than mine owne accustomed, or more honourable and better forme, I would not have done it: For, al I seeke to reape by my writings, is, they will naturally represent and to the life, pourtray me to your remembrance. The very same conditions and faculties, it pleased your Lady-ship to frequent and receive, with much more honor and curtesie, than they any way deserve. I will place and reduce (but without alteration and change) into a solide body, which may happily continue some dayes and yeares after mee: Where, when soever it shall please you to refresh your memory with them, you may easily finde them, without calling them to remembrance; which they scarcely deserve. I would entreate you to continue the favour of your Friend-ship towards me, by the same qualities, through whose meanes it was produced. I labour not to be beloved more and esteemed better being dead, than alive. The humour of *Tyberius* is ridiculous and common, who endeavoured more to extinguish his glory in future ages, than yeeld himselfe regardfull and pleasing to men of his times. If I were one of those, to whom the World may be

CHAPTER  
XXXVI

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

indebted for praise, I would quit it for the one moytie, on condition it would pay me before-hand: And that the same would hasten, and in great heapes environ me about, more thicke than long, and more full than lasting. And let it hardly vanish with my knowledge, and when this sweet alluring sound shall no more tickle mine eares. It were a fond conceit, now I am ready to leave the commerce of men, by new commendations, to goe about anew to beget my selfe unto them.

I make no account of goods, which I could not employ to the use of my life. Such as I am, so would I be elsewhere then in Paper. Mine art and industry have been employed to make myselfe of some worth. My study and endeavour to doe, and not to write. I have applied all my skill and devoire to frame my life. Lo-heere mine occupation and my worke. I am a lesse maker of bookes, then of any thing else. I have desired and aimed at sufficiencie, rather for the benefite of my present and essentiall commodities, then to make a store-house, and hoard it up for mine heires. Whosoever hath any worth in him, let him shew it in his behaviour, maners and ordinary discourses; be it to treat of love or of quarrels; of sport and play or bed-matters, at board or else-where; or be it in the conduct of his owne affaires, or private household matters. Those whom I see make good bookes, having tattered hosen and ragged clothes on, had they believed me they should first have gotten themselves good clothes. Demand a Spartan, whether he would rather be a cunning Rhethorician, then an excellent Souldier: nay were I asked, I wuld say, a good Cooke, had I not some to serve me. Good Lord (Madame) how I would hate such a commendation, to be a sufficient man in writing, and a foolish-shallow-headed braine or coxcombe in all

## THE SECOND BOOKE

things else: yet had I rather be a foole, both here CHA  
and there, then to have made so base a choise, XX  
wherein to imploy my worth. So farre am I also  
from expecting, by such trifles to gaine new honour  
to my self: as I shal think I make a good bargain, if  
I loose not a part of that little, I had already gained.  
For, besides that this dombe and dead picture, shall  
derogate and steale from my naturall being, it fadgeth  
not and hath no reference unto my better state, but  
is much fallen from my first vigor and naturall jollity,  
enclining to a kinde of drooping or mouldinesse. I  
am now come to the bottome of the vessell, which  
beginneth to taste of his dregs and lees. Otherwise  
(good Madame) I should not have dared so boldly to  
have ripped up the mysteries of Physicke, consider-  
ing the esteeme and credite your selfe, and so many  
others, ascribe unto it, and hold it in; had I not  
beene directed therunto by the authors of the same.  
I thinke they have but two ancient ones in Latine, to  
wit *Pliny* and *Celsus*. If you fortune at any time to  
looke into them, you shall finde them to speake much  
more rudely of their Art, then I doe. I but pinch it  
gently, they cut the throate of it. *Pliny* amongst  
other things, doth much scoffe at them, forsomuch  
as when they are at their wits end, and can go no  
further, they have found out this goodly shift, to send  
their long turmoiled, and to no end much tormented  
patient, with their drugs and diets, some to the helpe  
of their vowes and myraeles, and some others to hot  
Baths and waters. (Be not offend'd noble Lady, he  
meane'th not those on this side, under the protection  
of your house, and all *Gramontoises*.) They have a  
third kinde of shift or evasion to shake us off and dis-  
charge themselves of the imputations or reproaches,  
wee may justly charge them with, for the small  
amendment of our infirmities: whereof they have so  
long had the survey and government, as they have

Of the  
resem-  
betwe  
childr  
father



## MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYES

### CHAPTER XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

no more inventions or devises left them, to amuse us with; that is, to send us, to seeke and take the good aire of some other Country. Madam, we have harped long enough upon one string; I hope you will give me leave to come to my former discourses againe, from which for your better entertainement, I had somewhat digressed.

It was (as farre as I remember) *Pericles*, who being demanded, how he did; you may (said he) judge it by this, shewing certaine scroules or briefes he had tied about his necke and armes. He would infer, that he was very sicke, since he was forced to have recourse to such vanities, and had suffered himselfe to be so drest. I affirme not, but I may one day be drawne to such fond opinions, and yeeld my life and health to the mercy, discretion, and regiment of Phisitions. I may happily fall into this fond madnesse; I dare not warrant my future constancy. And even then if any aske me how I doe, I may answer him as did *Pericles*; You may judge, by shewing my hand fraughted with six drammes of Opium. It will be an evident token of a violent sicknesse. My judgement shall be exceedingly out of temper. If impacience or feare get that advantage upon me, you may thereby conclude some quelling fever hath seized upon my minde. I have taken the paines to plead this cause, whereof I have but small understanding, somewhat to strengthen and comfort naturall propension, against the drugs and practise of our Physicke, which is derived into me from mine ancestors: lest it might only be a stupid and rash inclination; and that it might have a little more forme. And that also those, who see me so constant against the exhortations and threatens, which are made against me, when sicknesse commeth upon me, may not thinke it to be a meere conceit, and simple wilfulnesse; And also, lest there be any so peevish, as

## THE SECOND BOOKE

to judge it to be some motive of vaine glory. *It were a strange desire, to seeke to draw honour from an action, common both to me, to my Gardiner, or to my Groome.* Surely my heart is not so puffed up, nor so windy, that a solide, fleshy and marrowy pleasure, as health is; I should change it for an imaginary spirituall and airy delight. Renowne or glory (were it that of *Aymons* foure sons) is over deerely bought by a man of my humour, if it cost him but three violent fits of the chollike. Give me health a Gods name. Those that love our Physicke, may likewise have their considerations good, great and strong, I hate no fantasies contrary to mine. I am so far from vexing my selfe, to see my judgement differ from other mens, or to grow incompatible of the society or conversation of men, to be of any other faction or opinion then mine owne; that contrariwise (as variety is the most generall fashion that nature hath followed, and more in the mindes, then in the bodies: forsomuch as they are of a more supple and yeelding substance and susceptible or admitting of formes) I finde it more rare to see our humor or desseignes agree in one. And never were there two opinions in the world alike, no more than two haire, or two graines. *Diversity is the most universall quality.*

CHAPTER  
XXXVII

Of the  
resemblance  
betweene  
children and  
fathers

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOKE

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.  
Edinburgh & London

VOL. II.

2 T

AL









58





W

A

r

Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 018 796 1

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
STANFORD AUXILIARY LIBRARY  
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004  
(650) 723-9201  
salcirc@sulmail.stanford.edu  
All books are subject to recall.  
DATE DUE

JUN 24 2001

MAY 31 2001

